



Wild elephants at Minneriya National Park

The Isle of Serendipity
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Post Congress Tour to Sri Lanka

10 – 18 May 2019

Colombo – Habarana – Passekudah – Kandy



Jon Baines
tours



Sigiriya

Welcome to Sri Lanka, a small island crammed full of treasures, with no fewer than eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Travel from the colonial capital of Colombo to the ancient cultural heartland of the island, through jungles and highlands, to a lovely beach resort and finish in the former royal capital of Kandy.

Arrive in Colombo and transfer to your hotel. In the evening enjoy a welcome dinner.

The next morning drive to Habarana in the ancient cultural heart of the island. In the afternoon travel by jeep into Minneriya National Park to watch birds, deer and herds of wild elephants gather to bathe and graze by the enormous Minneriya Tank, a reservoir built in the third century. The park contains some of the largest herds of wild elephants in the world.

Next day head out to the legendary sky citadel of Sigiriya, possibly the most spectacular site in Sri Lanka. Built by King Kasyapa in the 5th century on top of a vast 200m granite rock, the rock fortress is famous for its 'Lion Rock' and its 'Celestial Maidens' frescoes. Climb up in the cool early morning for spectacular jungle views.

After descending, visit the school and rural health clinic in a nearby village before watching a cookery demonstration and enjoying a typical Sri Lankan lunch at a Chena Cultivation. Return to the hotel and spend the afternoon at leisure with options to visit the spa or take a short wildlife and nature trek of the region.

Next morning visit Polonnaruwa, the island's medieval capital between the 11th and 13th century, to see the well preserved ruins built alongside a large ancient artificial lake. In the



The lakeside town of Kandy



Itinerary 10 – 18 May 2019

10 May (Fri) **Bangkok / Colombo** D

Am Depart Bangkok for Colombo
Pm Arrive and transfer to the Galle Face Hotel
Eve Welcome dinner at the hotel

11 May (Sat) **Colombo / Habarana** B D

Am Drive to Habarana and check into the Cinnamon Lodge
Pm Visit Minneriya National Park

12 May (Sun) **Habarana** B L D

Am Visit the legendary sky citadel of Sigiriya. Visit a local village, school and rural health clinic
Pm Local cookery demonstration and lunch. Return to the hotel and at leisure

13 May (Mon) **Habarana / Passekudah** B D

Am Visit Polonnaruwa, the island's medieval capital
Pm Continue to Anantaya Resort

14 May (Tue) **Passekudah** B D

Am Full day at leisure
Pm Optional Sri Lanka cookery class

15 May (Wed) **Passekudah** B D

Am Full day at leisure
Pm Optional Sri Lanka cookery class

16 May (Thur) **Passekudah / Kandy** B L D

Am Drive to Kandy, visiting the cave temples of Dambulla en route. Visit the spice plantations of Matale and enjoy a delicious Sri Lankan lunch
Pm Arrive Kandy and transfer to the Cinnamon Citadel

17 May (Fri) **Kandy** B D

Am Visit the Royal Botanical Gardens of Peradeniya
Pm Explore the city of Kandy including the gemstone market and workshops. Visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha. See the blessing ceremony, followed by drinks at the Swiss Hotel
Eve Farewell dinner

18 May (Sat) **Kandy** B

Am / Pm Depart for airport for onward flights

afternoon continue to Anantaya Resort on the glorious white-gold sand arc of Passekudah on the east coast.

Spend two nights at the Anantaya Resort with your days at leisure to enjoy the beautiful coast of Passekudah, with options to take cookery classes at the hotel.

Check out of the Anantaya Resort and drive to Kandy, the old capital of Ceylon, stopping en route at the Cave Temples of Dambulla, built in the 1st century BC and featuring ancient frescoes and hundreds of statues of Buddha. You will also visit the spice plantations of Matale and enjoy a delicious Sri Lankan lunch. Continue to the lovely city of Kandy, set around an ancient lake amidst rolling hills, and check into the Cinnamon Citadel.

Visit the Royal Botanical Gardens of Peradeniya and visit the excellent orchid house, along with the medicinal herbal section. In the afternoon visit Kandy's gemstone market to see Sri Lanka's famous sapphires being cut and polished. Visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth, which houses one of Buddhism's most sacred relics – a tooth of Buddha. See brightly robed monks performing the blessing ceremony with drums and trumpets. Afterwards enjoy drinks at the Swiss Hotel (the former home of Lord Mountbatten).

The following day transfer to the airport.



The verandah at Galle Face Hotel, Colombo (top);
Cinnamon Lodge, Habarana; Anantaya Resort, Passekudah;
Cinnamon Citadel, Kandy (above)

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The ground only cost of the tour is \$2,780 (excluding international flights and transfers) and includes:

- Eight nights' accommodation on sharing basis in first class hotels

Single room supplement: \$780

- Australian tour leader (Annette Holian)
- Comprehensive briefing notes
- Breakfast and dinner daily
- All transport within the tour
- Full programme of cultural visits
- Admission fees where applicable and tips
- National guide throughout
- Complementary water daily

The cost excludes

- International flights* (see below) and transfers
- Sri Lankan visa
- All personal extras such as portage, laundry, inoculation fees and drinks
- All optional excursions, tours and visits
- Travel insurance

* Please contact the Melbourne office if you need help booking your flights.

Flights from Bangkok: If attending the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Congress in Bangkok you can fly to Sri Lanka direct on Thai and Sri Lankan Airlines. On the return journey to Australia there are flights on Qantas, Sri Lankan Airlines, Thai and Singapore, amongst others.

Tour leader Annette Holian is an orthopaedic surgeon with a background in trauma and disaster response. As RAAF Group Captain Holian, she has served as a surgeon in Afghanistan and Banda Aceh. Annette worked in surgical care in PNG and responded to the Aitape tsunami in 1998 and has since been a first responder in several disasters. Annette was the first woman orthopaedic surgeon in Australia, the first mother admitted into surgical training and the first female surgeon in RAAF. She is on College Council and holds the External Affairs Chair, is Chair of the Military Section of RACS, is patron of the Catalina Association, a Governor at the Shrine of Remembrance and has travelled through Sri Lanka

