



Some of the world's oldest landscaped gardens at Sigiriya

Botanical Histories in Sri Lanka

29 March – 12 April 2025



Level 3
MODERATE





Peradeniya Botanical Gardens, Kandy

Travel in the company of botanical expert, Carolyn Fry, to discover Sri Lanka's botanical treasures.

Learn about its spice trade and production, both historical and contemporary, with practical applications in a cooking demonstration. Discover the significance of the Bo-tree and lotus flower at Dambulla Caves and walk through the Popham Arboretum, Sri Lanka's only dry zone arboretum.

Visit the impressive botanical gardens in Peradeniya and Nuwara Eliya, as well as Victoria Park in Nuwara Eliya for the Annual Flower Show, with which the tour coincides.

A cultural programme includes visits to mystical ruins, jungles, tropical beaches, spice plantations and gemstone markets, national parks with huge herds of elephants and vivid green mountains. You will also stay in some stunning hotels and savour mouth-watering local cuisine.

Tour Activity Level

THIS TOUR IS CLASSED AS:

Level 1
Relaxed



Level 2
Gentle



Level 3
Moderate



Level 4
Active



Level 5
Challenging



A gentle pace, involving minimal walking and exertion. Shorter travel distances and a full but relatively relaxed itinerary.

Easy walking at a mostly leisurely pace. Slightly more daily activity and travel.

Regular walking at destinations, extended standing and/or increased travel distances. Good fitness is required.

Longer and fuller days. Significant levels of walking, covering longer distances, requiring very good fitness and mobility.

May involve extended drives, hikes and multiple visits across busy days. Excellent fitness is required.

Tour Leader

Carolyn Fry is an author and journalist specialising in science, conservation, natural history and adventure travel. She has written and contributed to 11 books, covering botanical explorers, the origins of plant-based foods and climate science. Carolyn has won many awards for her work, including the 2016 Garden Media Guild Award for Best Environmental Book for 'Seeds: Safeguarding our Future.'

A former editor of *Geographical*, the magazine of the Royal Geographical Society, Carolyn has contributed to *New Scientist*, *BBC Wildlife*, *BBC History*, *The Times*, *Sunday Telegraph*, *Independent on Sunday* and *Kew Magazine*, among others. Her work has taken her far and wide; from visiting the world's most remote post office in Antarctica, to following in the footsteps of Livingstone in Zambia and wandering ancient palm forests in the Seychelles.



She has appeared on two BBC documentaries, to discuss the role of plants as commodities during the British Empire and the resurgence of tropical gardens. Carolyn has previously led successful botanical tours to South India and South Africa.

A beautiful tea plantation in Nuwara Eliya



2 nights Colombo – 3 nights Habarana – 2 nights Kandy – 3 nights Nuwara Eliya
– 3 nights Galle – 1 night Colombo



Day 1: Colombo (Sat, 29 Mar)

D

Pm: Arrive and transfer to the hotel, where you will have dinner.

Day 2: Colombo (Sun, 30 Mar)

B D

Wetland city – Colombo's canals and lakes

Am: Visit the Thalangama Wetlands. Continue on to the flower market at Diyatha Uyana (the water garden) near the Water's Edge Complex. Colombo is an official Ramsar Wetland City since 2018 - managing the wetlands in the city is part of the city development plan.

Pm: Explore the old town of Colombo and learn about the spice trade and Colombo's history.

Eve: Return in time for sundowners and a welcome dinner.

Day 3: Colombo / Kandalama (Mon, 31 Mar)

B D

Biodiversity abounds – birds and butterflies

Am: Drive to Habarana via the Ceylon Kingsmen Garden at Negombo.

Pm: Check in to Kandamala Hotel, surrounded by jungle and designed by Sri Lanka's famed architect Geoffrey Bawa. Explore the hotel and grounds, which are home to birds, butterflies, monkeys and giant squirrels.

Day 4: Kandalama (Tues, 1 Apr)

B L D

Ancient gardens – the rock fortress of kings

Am: Early start to visit the legendary sky citadel of Sigiriya, famous for the 'Lion Rock' and its frescoes of 'Celestial Maidens'. As well as the rock fortress it has some of the oldest landscaped gardens in the world. Visit a local village with a small school and continue to a village house, where you will take part in a cookery demonstration using local spices. Enjoy a delicious lunch with locals in the house. Return to the hotel for dinner.

Eve: Optional night-time wildlife walk at Vil Uyana to look for the slender loris.

Day 5: Kandalama (Wed, 2 Apr)

B D

Healing herbs – Sri Lanka's role in an Indian epic

Am: Option to visit the ancient site of the monastery of Ritigala, an ancient Buddhist site set within the Ritigala Strict Nature Reserve. The site includes a historic Ayurveda herbal medicine hospital. In the Indian epic Ramayana, healing herbs were allegedly carried by Hanuman from the Himalayas and dropped here.

Pm: Visit Minneriya National Park and see large herds of elephants and flocks of birds.

Day 6: Kandalama / Kandy (Thu, 3 Apr)

B L D

The lotus and the Bo – the plants of Buddhism

Am: Drive to Kandy via Dambulla and take a walk through the Popham Arboretum, Sri Lanka's only dry zone arboretum. The arboretum has many species of birds, butterflies, dragonflies, spiders and the main building was designed by Geoffrey Bawa. Continue to the Cave Temple Complex of Dambulla. Learn of the Bo tree and the lotus - both of which can be seen outside the caves.

Pm: Continue on to Matale and visit a spice plantation. Watch a cookery demonstration using many spices, followed

by a delicious Sri Lankan lunch. Arrive at the Cinnamon Citadel Hotel in Kandy.

Day 7: Kandy (Fri, 4 Apr)

B D

Cultivating commodities – Peradeniya's colonial past

Am: Visit the Royal Botanical Gardens of Peradeniya, visiting the plantations of coffee, tea, rubber and cinchona and the orchid house, along with the medicinal herbal section.

Pm: Visit the city of Kandy and the gemstone market and gem workshops.

Eve: Visit the Temple of the Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha, followed by the evening ceremony in the temple, with brightly robed monks performing the blessing ceremony with drums and trumpets. Dinner in a local restaurant in Kandy.

Day 8: Kandy / Nuwara Eliya (Sat, 5 Apr)

B D

Going up country – the cooler climes of 'Little England'

Am: Take the scenic train journey through the beautiful tea country and high country to Nuwara Eliya.

Pm: Explore the colonial hill station, including the golf course, racetrack, gentlemen's clubs, British cemetery and the Holy Trinity Church. Check in to St Andrews Hotel and have dinner.

Day 9: Nuwara Eliya (Sun, 6 Apr)

B D

Just the tonic – seeking a cure for malaria

Am: Visit Hakgala Botanic Garden in its dramatic setting. These gardens were established to grow cinchona and present a contrast to Peradeniya.

Pm: Visit Victoria Park in Nuwara Eliya for the Annual Flower Show.

Eve: Step back in time with dinner at the Hill Club, founded in 1878 by British planters.

Day 10: Nuwara Eliya (Mon, 7 Apr)

B D

Time for tea – Growing the world's favourite drink

Am: Visit the Somerset Tea Estate and visit the plantation and tea factory. Sri Lanka

grows some of the world's finest teas, including white tea and orange pekoe tea.

Pm: At leisure. Option to return to the Flower Show. Enjoy a high tea at St Andrews Hotel.

Day 11: Nuwara Eliya / Galle

B L D

(Tues, 8 Apr)

Highland farming – supporting local communities

Am: Travel to Galle via AMBA Estate, an organic farm and social enterprise in the Uva Highlands. Take part in a botanical and farm tour and learn about their artisanal teas.

Pm: Light lunch at AMBA before a beautiful drive to Galle along the coastline to the atmospheric walled city of Galle, which boasts the best-preserved sea fort in Asia.

Day 12: Galle (Wed, 9 Apr)

B L

Fortified city – Dutch and Portuguese influences

Am: A leisurely start to explore the old city of Galle and hear of the stories of Dutch and Portuguese trading history.

Pm: Afternoon at leisure.

Day 13: Galle (Thu, 10 Apr)

B D

Beach life – sun, sea and fish suppers

Am: Full day at leisure on the coast with options to go whale watching. Sri Lanka is one of the best places in the world to see blue whales.

Day 14: Galle / Colombo (Fri, 11 Apr)

B D

The Bawa brothers – Sri Lanka's creative siblings

Am: Visit stunning Lunuganga Estate, the former home and grounds of celebrated Sri Lankan architect, Geoffrey Bawa.

Pm: Continue to Brief Gardens, considered one of the great private gardens of the world and the home of Bevis Bawa, older brother to Geoffrey and a landscape architect. Return to the Galle Face Hotel.

Eve: Farewell dinner at the hotel.

Day 15: Colombo (Sat, 12 Apr)

B

Am: Depart hotel after breakfast.

All itineraries subject to change according to local conditions



Heritage Kandalama (Sigiriya)

Hotels

Galle Face Hotel (Colombo)

The Galle Face Hotel is Sri Lanka's iconic landmark, situated in the heart of Colombo along the seafront and facing the famous Galle Face Green. One of the grandest hotels in south Asia, the Galle Face Hotel has a number of restaurants, bars and spa, a saltwater pool, a library, museum and croquet lawn.

Heritage Kandalama (Dambulla)

Rising out of the lush mountainside, the Heritage Kandalama is a stunning, architect-designed hotel in Sigiriya. The hotel has been designed to blend into the surrounding and has two restaurants, a lounge, a bar and a café, an infinity pool and an acclaimed spa.

Cinnamon Citadel (Kandy)

Surrounded by sweeping green hills, and set on the river just outside Kandy, this lovely hotel has a spa, garden restaurant, pool and bar, as well as beautiful gardens and superb views.

St Andrew's Hotel (Nuwara Eliya)

Step back into colonial Ceylon at the mock Tudor country house hotel. Wake up to a typical

English breakfast of bacon and eggs and enjoy a stiff brandy at night.

The Merchant Fort Galle (Galle)

A boutique hotel with elegant décor, warm and attentive service and laidback charm. It has a superb location in the heart of World Heritage Site of Fort Galle and provides spacious, light-filled and comfortable rooms. Its warm, contemporary style is offset with historic touches throughout.



The pool at Merchant Fort Galle (Galle)



The seafront pool at Galle Face Hotel, Colombo (top);
The Merchant Fort Galle Hotel, Galle; Evening on the terrace,
Cinnamon Citadel, Kandy; Galle Face Hotel, Colombo (above)

**The cost of the tour is
USD \$4,144 per person sharing**

**The cost of the tour with a
room to yourself is USD \$5,180**

The cost includes:

- Tour leader and speaker, Carolyn Fry
- Comprehensive briefing notes
- 14 nights' accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities in a first class and medium grade hotels
- Meals as per the itinerary (breakfast and lunch or dinner daily)
- Water throughout the tour
- All transport and transfers
- A full programme of visits and talks as per the itinerary
- Admission fees and tips

The cost excludes:

- Meals not mentioned
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls
- International flights and airport transfers

Close up of a lotus flower, Sri Lanka



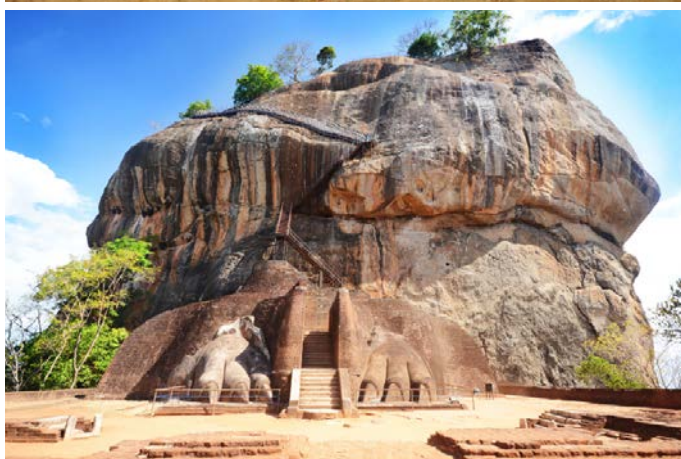
About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.

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A blue whale off the coast of Sri Lanka (top); 'Celestial Maidens' fresco in Sigiriya; Lion Rock at Sigiriya; Galle (extension) (above)



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tours

