

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Cycle Sri Lanka (CSL 2017)



TRIPDURATION
14
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Tour Type: Small Groups
Cycling Grade: Moderate

Trip Code: CSL

Trip Highlights - Cycle Sri Lanka

- ✓ Cycle Backroads and tea plantations - Ride through the rural villages and hill country of Sri Lanka's central highlands
- ✓ Sigiriya - The stunning cave temples at Dambulla and the mountain top fortress of King Kassapa
- ✓ Polonnaruwa - Explore the ancient city of Polonnaruwa by bike
- ✓ Kandy - Lovely gardens and the unique Temple of the Tooth
- ✓ Unawatuna - Relax beside the golden beaches and explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Galle fortress
- ✓ Nature and wildlife - A chance to take game drives through Udawalawe and Yala National Parks

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 13 nights Standard Hotel

Included Meals: 13 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 2 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Negombo

End Point: Trip ends: Colombo Airport

Included Bike: 27 gear Stevens Galant hybrid bikes with front suspension

Transport: Bus, Bicycle

Countries: Sri Lanka



Cycle Sri Lanka

Completing a circular journey this trip takes in ancient temples and fortresses, cycling through tea plantations and across the scenic trails of the Knuckles Range. Leaving the coast behind we explore the ancient city of Polonnaruwa on two wheels before steadily climbing to the wide plains of the Knuckles. There is also the option to search for leopard in Yala National Park before making our way to the beach for a well-earned rest.

Why Book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

Cycling Information

On this tour we cycle 417 km over ten days (an average of 42 km per day) with a further optional 18 km available. The terrain is mostly flat however there are steeper sections around Nuwara Eliya in the highlands. About 20% of the entire route is on poor quality pot-holed roads or dirt roads. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We have graded the route as moderate.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Cycling Grade: Moderate

Medium length rides are suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. You'll be cycling mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.

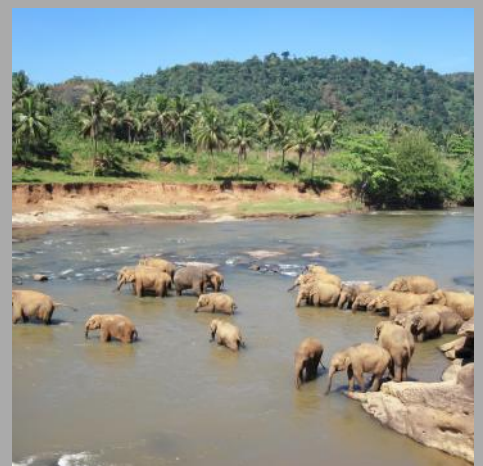
Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.



DAY 1 Join tour Negombo

Our adventure begins in Negombo, just a short drive from the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo. After a chance to relax and freshen up we are introduced to our bikes, spend some time ensuring everybody is happy with the fit and making any necessary adjustments. Then, time permitting, we take our first ride in the late afternoon, exploring the coast of Negombo with its colourful fishing boats and relaxed people. A gentle introduction to Sri Lanka's beautiful landscapes, the ride covers some 10 kilometres before we head back to the hotel before dark.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Morning cycle ride. Afternoon visit Dambulla cave temple

Leaving after breakfast we drive (30mins) to Dankotuwa this morning, from where we begin our morning's cycle ride through small backroads, gravel or dirt roads (15km) and lovely forest to the outskirts of Kuliyaipitya. Please note that the road surface for today's ride is in a poor state of repair. Arriving in Kuliyaipitya, we then transfer by bus (2.5hrs) to Dambulla for a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, breaking our journey with a lunch stop in Kurunegala. Dambulla has a great series of caves which hide an incredible collection of temples, Buddhist images and Hindu sculptures that date back to the 1st century BC. After our visit we continue by bus a short distance to Dambulla where we spend the evening. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 41 kilometres (total 270 metres ascent and descent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3 Climb Lion Rock, then cycle to Polonnaruwa

First thing this morning we cycle (24km) alongside lakes and canals to Sigiriya. We then leave the bikes as we climb the imposing 'Sky Fortress' of King Kassapa, whose 5th century ruins are one of the country's major archaeological attractions. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the fortress is accessed by way of a series of steep steps that take us past the famous frescoes of the 'Sigiriya Damsels'. Returning to the base of Lion Rock, we drive (45mins) to Minneriya where the second leg of today's ride commences. Back on our bikes we ride to the ancient city of Polonnaruwa. Our route follows a series of relatively straight and flat backroads through a landscape dotted with forests and villages, with around 30km on gravel or dirt roads. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 50 kilometres (total 280 metres ascent and descent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Pedal to Polonnaruwa archaeological site and village

Polonnaruwa reached the height of its glory in the 12th century and the city is still blessed with a number of ancient monuments, including the spectacular ruins of its Royal Palace and the Circular Relic House, a curious structure with a beautifully preserved 'moonstone' carved at the foot of a flight of steps. We spend this morning cycling around some of the area's major archaeological sites, before continuing on bike after lunch to explore the villages near Parakkrama Lake, one of the country's most impressive ancient reservoirs. Around 10km of today's route is on gravel or dirt roads. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres (total 100 metres ascent and descent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Cycle and drive to Kandy, visit spice gardens en route

Today we cycle through the Knuckles Range and on to Kandy, one of Sri Lanka's cultural highlights. Transferring by bus (30mins) to Giritale, we begin our day's ride by cycling south towards Pallegama, always staying close to Wasgamuwa National Park. Our ride ends here and we get back in the vehicle to drive up into the Knuckles Mountain Range. These striking landscapes and isolated cloud forests provide a haven for a rich diversity of flora and fauna. After around an hour and a half we reach the highest point at Riverston pass. From here we descend for about another hour and half to Matale Spice Gardens where we plan to visit. Finally we drive (1hr) on to Kandy and our accommodation for the night. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 42 kilometres (total 250 metres ascent and descent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 6 Explore Kandy on foot

With no cycling planned for today we have some free time to enjoy one of the country's cultural gems. Lying in the mountains to the north-east of Colombo, Kandy is renowned as a centre of spiritual and cultural importance. The city is home to the famous 'Temple of the Tooth', whose jewelled shrine is believed to hold the left canine of the lord Buddha. It was also the last capital of the Sinhala Kings and still retains much of its old world charm; its wonderful mix of colour and vibrancy making it an ideal spot to explore at our own pace. No cycling today.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Into the beautiful highlands, colonial Nuwara Eliya and tea plantation visit

Leaving Kandy this morning we drive for around two hours through a picturesque landscape of rolling, verdant hills into Sri Lanka's central highlands. On our journey we will stop at a tea estate to learn about tea picking and processing and to see the impressive Ramboda Falls. There is the option for keen cyclists to ride on good (albeit steep!) tarmac for the final 18km section up to our hotel in Nuwara Eliya. Nestling amongst the lush, cool hills, nearly 1,900 metres above sea level, Nuwara Eliya was once a summer retreat for the British and still retains a distinctly colonial feel that harks back to its 19th century origins. Later today we will walk into the tea plantations and through Tamil hamlets meeting families of tea pickers. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 18 kilometres (optional) (total 900 metres ascent).


Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Ride to Bambarakanda waterfall

In the morning we leave the hotel, cycling out through the highlands towards Badulla. Later changing direction to ride through the tea estates to Haputale. If anybody is keen and has the energy, it is possible to add a further 25 km with further riding in the hills before Haputale. We continue downhill on our bikes, and if time allows we will stop at Bambarakanda Waterfall, the highest in Sri Lanka, before arriving at the hotel. This evening dinner is included. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 60 kilometres (total 400 metres ascent and 1500 metres descent).


Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 Cycle to Udawalawe National Park; optional safari

Today we cycle through the spectacular southern slopes of the highlands via Rajawaka and Palledbedda until reaching Highway 18 where our ride ends. We then drive (30mins) to the Elephant Transit home for the chance to see the feeding of baby elephants. Afterwards we either drive to our hotel in Embilipitiya with free time this afternoon to relax, or alternatively have an optional 4WD jeep safari in Udawalwe National Park. The park is famous for its large elephant herds and has many other game to look for, from buffalo to sambar deer plus many bird species. This evening dinner is included. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 38 kilometres (total 315 metres ascent and 730 metres descent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 Cycle country roads to Yala National Park; optional safari

Turning south-east this morning, our cycle route leads us to the pleasant town of Tissamaharama, once the capital of the Sinhalese Kingdom of Ruhuna. Lying close to the beautiful and abundant landscapes of Yala National Park, our afternoon arrival provides us with a chance to enjoy an optional game drive through the park. One of Sri Lanka's more popular reserves, Yala is home to a rich diversity of ecosystems and is blessed with an abundance of wildlife, including sea turtles, sloth bears, one of the world's highest concentrations of leopards and over 215 species of birds. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 46 kilometres (total 200 metres ascent and 250 metres descent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 11 Ride along the coast through Bundala National Park

This morning we drive (30mins) to the coast and then cycle the first 23km section along the coast and Bundala National Park, giving us a good chance to spot crocodiles. We then get back in the vehicle and drive for around an hour to a point beyond Tangalla. From here we cycle again following back roads heading to the west. Our cycle ride ends in Matara where we get back on the bus again and drive (1hr) to the hotel in Unawatuna. Around 20kms of today's ride is on gravel or dirt roads. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 65 kilometres (total 450 metres ascent and descent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 12 Cycle the coastal backroads and visit Galle

We take a short drive to Mirissa this morning and cycle from here through the backroads, with a possible option to visit an Ayurvedic snake doctor. The ride then finishes later at Weligama Bay where we plan to have lunch. From here we will return to our hotel in Unawatuna by train or bus, in time for an evening stroll in Galle. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 32 kilometres (total 100 metres ascent and descent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 13 Day at leisure in Unawatuna

Today has been left free to enjoy the laid back ambience and turquoise waters of Sri Lanka's southern coast. Rich in biodiversity, colonial history and golden beaches, the area offers a wealth of options to make the most of our last day in the country. You could take a walk through the landscapes of the Rumas Sala Nature Reserve, or explore the coast on a relaxing boat trip. There are also snorkelling trips available, ayurvedic massages and even the possibility of enjoying a whale-watching trip during the migration season (December to April). No cycling today.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 14 Tour ends at Colombo airport

After breakfast we drive (2.5hrs) to Colombo airport where the tour ends.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

Standard - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Simple - These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, sometimes with en suite facilities.

Traditional Sri Lankan cuisine is excellent, and although it can be very spicy there are many dishes that feature cooling coconut milk or have a spicy sambar on the side to allow you to adjust the meal to your taste. There isn't a culture of eating out in Sri Lanka, most locals will eat at home, and as such there are very few restaurants around, and those that exist tend to be in hotels. As tourism develops a few independent restaurants are beginning to appear, mainly in Colombo but also in Kandy, Galle and in the coastal resorts. During the tour we will endeavour to eat out at local restaurants wherever possible but for many nights, at this point in time, the hotel restaurants are the only option available.

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Food & Drink

Included meals: 13 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 2 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Sri Lanka

Lunch £: 4.00

Dinner £: 8.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Sri Lanka

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00

Water £: 0.50

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Optional Jeep safari in Udawalawe - approximately 40 USD per person

Optional game drive in Yala NP - approximately 40 USD per person

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly, you should allow GBP 40 for tipping.

Foreign Exchange

Sri Lanka

ATM Availability: Yes, usually in major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards can usually be used in most large shops and restaurants. Please note that Foreign Office advice warns about the problem of credit card fraud in Sri Lanka so please consider this when deciding if to pay by card while on tour.

Travellers Cheques: Are not easy to change and where they can be changed the exchange rates can be poor.

Local Currency: Sri Lankan Rupee.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US\$ and UK£ are equally good

Where to Exchange: In most major towns.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

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The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Sri Lanka: A visa is required by all nationalities. All customers, including those in transit must apply online for travel authorization, prior to departure.

You should visit <http://www.eta.gov.lk> to apply for the ETA (visa). It is strongly recommended that you print and bring a copy of the ETA approval notice with you.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.



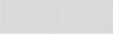



Vaccinations & Protection

Sri Lanka

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A plus Polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. We strongly recommend the wearing long sleeved shirts and the liberal application of insect repellents containing DEET as a precautionary measure to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. These precautions should be taken at all times as the mosquitoes are also active during daylight hours. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Preparing for your Trip

DAILY DISTANCES

Day 1		10km
Day 2		41km
Day 3		50km
Day 4		33km
Day 5		42km
Day 6		0km
Day 7		18km
Day 8		60km
Day 9		38km
Day 10		46km
Day 11		65km
Day 12		32km

 Optional Rides

Bike Details

Your included bike is a 27 gear Stevens Galant hybrid with front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. Female and male frames are allocated accordingly when booking unless you specifically request otherwise. A pannier and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Climate

Sri Lanka

Year round high temperatures in coastal regions: Colombo averages 27°C. It is much cooler in the hills with Kandy averaging 20°C and Nuwara Eliya down to 16°C. Springlike temperatures in the hill country, but chilly evenings. Two monsoon periods: Apr-Sep when rain is confined to the southwest; and Oct-Mar when it falls in the northeast.

Clothing

In general pack for warm and hot weather. However, you must bring a warm sweater or jacket for cycling on cool days and for wearing during the evenings. We recommend you bring padded cycle shorts, cycle gloves and quick drying cycle shirts. In case of rain, waterproofs are essential.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

All bed linen is supplied on our two nights simple camp - there is no need to bring any extra equipment or sleeping bags.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage: On Tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Sri Lanka

Population: 20,238,000

Size of Country: 65,610 sq km

Major Language: Sinhala, Tamil

Religion: Buddhism

Time Difference to GMT: +6

Electric Supply & Plugs

Sri Lanka

3 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to - and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants,

allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

These trip notes were printed on 21/07/2017 00:55:07