Encounter Travel
Travel Solo, Not Alone

'Solos Only' 40 Years +
ENCOUNTER SRI LANKA



'Sharing the journey takes 'alone' out of solo travel.' ®

LEADING THE WAY SINCE 2006 FOR SOLO TRAVELLERS

14 DAYS / 13 NIGHTS

Ancient rock fortresses, wild elephants, tea country and a coastline of old fort cities. Sri Lanka holds thousands of years of history on one island, and we will explore it together.

This **14-day 'Solos Only'** tour brings together a small group of fellow solo travellers. We will see UNESCO World Heritage sites, ride one of the country's best-known train routes, enjoy a village lunch and share dinner with a local family in Kandy and spend time with elephants in two national parks. We stay three nights each in Dambulla and Galle, with a full day at leisure in Galle to wander at your own pace.

We begin in Negombo, then head inland to the cultural triangle. We will climb Sigiriya Rock Fortress, explore the ancient capital of Polonnaruwa and set out on a jeep safari in search of wild elephants. In Kandy, we visit the Temple of the Tooth Relic and have dinner at a local family home.

From Nuwara Eliya, we ride the train from Ambewela to Ella through tea country, then spend time with elephants at Udawalawe National Park. We finish on the south coast with three nights in Galle, a cruise along the Madu River and a full day at leisure, before a farewell dinner in Colombo.

We stay in 4 and 5 star hotels throughout, from a beachside hotel in Negombo to a colonial hotel in the hill country.






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INCLUSIONS

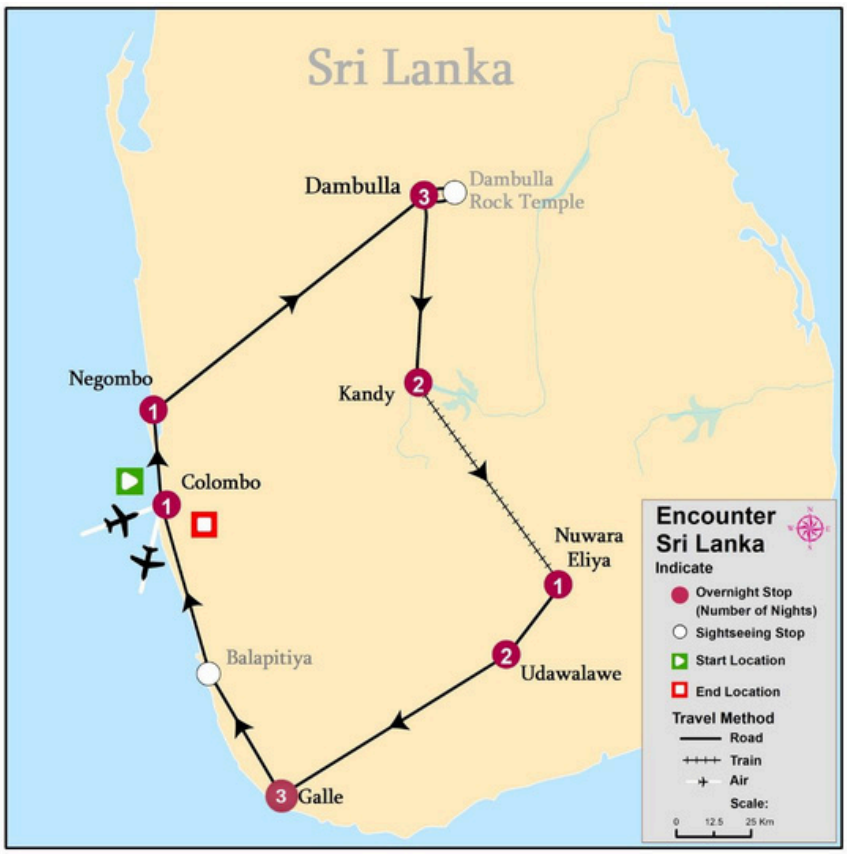
Accommodation & Meals
- 13 nights (4 - 5 star) hotel accommodation
- 13 breakfasts
- 3 lunches
- 1 high tea
- 12 dinners

Sightseeing & Guides
- English-speaking Sri Lanka national group tour leader ^
- Sightseeing and entrance fees as per itinerary

Transport
- Group private air conditioned road transport
- 1 scenic train journey, during the day
- Elephant jeep safaris
- River boat ride
- Colombo Airport transfer; on arrival & departure to/from group hotel^^

Additional Inclusions
- Porterage in and out of hotels included where available
- Government taxes & fees
- Small group experience, maximum 16 travellers

~ tipping fund USD100 paid locally in Sri Lanka
^ group size 7 or less travellers, a driver-guide is provided
^^ refer to Getting There page on website



Not Included

- Airfares to/from Sri Lanka
- Any tips for local guides, drivers, tour director, hotel staff and other support staff.
- Porterage at airports
- Travel insurance
- Excess baggage
- Visa fees if applicable
- Meals and beverages not specified on itinerary
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry & medical expenses
- Incidental expenses such as taxi fares, telecommunication

ABOUT US

At Encounter Travel we offer holiday **groups for solo travellers**. All trips are age-matched so there's more chance you'll share your journey with like minded travellers. Visiting destinations across Australia and around the globe, choose from short escapes to leisurely touring, cruise and resort groups.

We are a multi-award winning tour company; two time winner of the global **Solo Travel Awards**, winner in the **Australian Travel Awards** in the specialist category, LUXLife Hospitality **Best Specialist Solo Travel Agency** – Australasia, and LUXLife Travel & Tourism **Best Solo Traveller Tour Operator** - Australia.

2019 WINNER Specialist Wholesaler of the Year The Travel Awards

THE SOLO TRAVEL AWARDS 2018 WINNER SOLO-ONLY TRAVEL

THE SOLO TRAVEL AWARDS 2017 WINNER SPECIALTY TOURS

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ENCOUNTER SRI LANKA 'SOLOS ONLY'

Content in this flyer is only a part of the information. For full details please refer to our website.

TRAVEL DATES

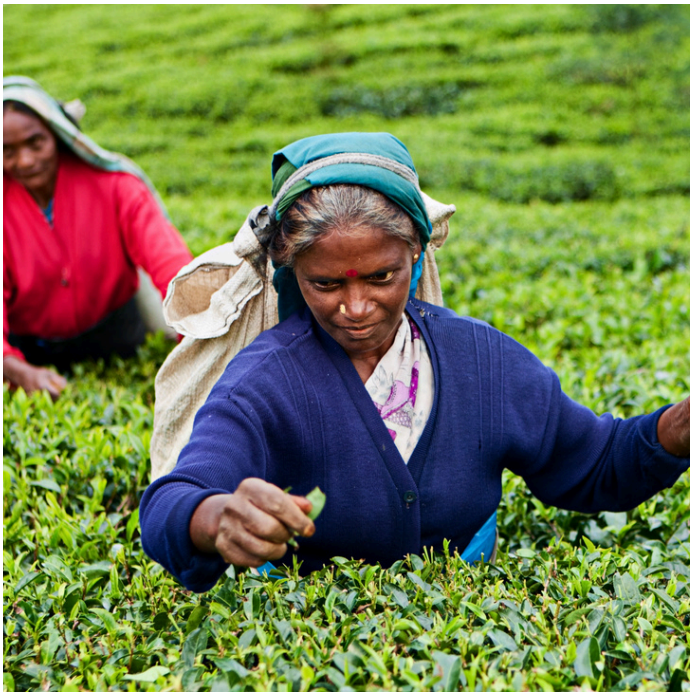
Itinerary: 14 days
28 March - 10 April 2027
02 - 15 October 2027
30 March - 12 April 2028 (tentative)

PRICES

Own room (solo occupancy)
28 March 2027 $6155
02 October 2027 $6445
30 March 2028 $T.B.A

HIGHLIGHTS

- Welcome dinner at our beachside hotel in Negombo
- Dambulla Rock Cave Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site
- Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka's second ancient capital
- Jeep safari in Minneriya National Park in search of wild elephants
- Climbing Sigiriya Rock Fortress
- A village tractor ride, canoe crossing and cooking demonstration
- Temple of the Tooth Relic and a traditional Kandyan dance performance
- Dinner at a local family home in Kandy
- Tea plantation visit and afternoon high tea in Nuwara Eliya
- The train from Ambewela to Ella through tea country
- Dawn jeep safari and the Elephant Transit Home at Udawalawe
- Galle Dutch Fortress, a Madu River cruise and a full day at leisure



TRIP PACE [3 OUT OF 5]

This moderately paced tour includes some days with early starts. Touring is most enjoyed with a good level of fitness. A minimum of an average level of fitness is recommended for this tour. Travellers of 70 years or more may be required to return a Fit to Travel form that is completed by their doctor.

FELLOW TRAVELLERS

You will enjoy this boutique small group experience with a maximum of 16 travellers. This is a Solos Only (couple-free) tour. You are welcome to join with a friend. It will depart with a minimum of four travellers.

LUGGAGE

Please ensure your luggage meets the requirements for touring. Also consider restrictions provided by airlines. Maximum tour luggage.

Checked Luggage: 1 piece up to 23 kg.
Hand Luggage: 1 piece up to 8kg such as daypack, and 1 small piece such as a handbag.

ENCOUNTER SRI LANKA 'SOLOS ONLY'

ITINERARY

DAY 1
Arrive in Negombo

Welcome to Sri Lanka! Travellers arrive on various flights throughout the day. By mid-afternoon, meet your fellow group members and tour director for a welcome drink and briefing at the hotel.

This evening, a sightseeing tour of Negombo takes in the local fishing village and market, before we gather for a welcome dinner at our beachside hotel.

Meals: Welcome Dinner

Snapshot - What's Included
- Welcome drink and tour briefing, 3:00pm
- Negombo sightseeing tour: fishing village and market
- Welcome dinner at the hotel

DAY 2
Negombo to Dambulla

After breakfast we depart for Dambulla, our base for the next three nights. This afternoon we visit the remarkable Dambulla Rock Cave Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of Sri Lanka's most extraordinary places of worship.

Dating to the 1st century BC, the complex of five caves holds over 150 images of the Buddha, including a colossal figure carved from rock spanning 14 metres. The cave walls and ceilings are covered in more than 2,000 square metres of paintings, the largest such area in the world. A relaxed dinner at the hotel rounds out the evening.

Encounter Moment Three nights in one place. Time to settle in and start to find our feet together.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Snapshot - What's Included
- Transfer Negombo to Dambulla (approx. 3.5 hours)
- Dambulla Rock Cave Temple visit (UNESCO World Heritage site)
- Dinner at the hotel



DAY 3
Polonnaruwa and Minneriya National Park

After breakfast, we visit Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka's second ancient capital, built in the 11th and 12th centuries and recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site. We explore the Royal Palace ruins and see the rock-carved Buddha statues at Gal Viharaya.

In the afternoon we transfer to Minneriya National Park for a jeep safari in search of wild elephants. The ancient Minneriya Tank, built in the 3rd century AD, draws large herds to its shores to bathe and graze alongside flocks of cormorants, painted storks, and an abundance of other wildlife.

We return to Dambulla for dinner and an overnight stay. Encounter Moment Two very different Sri Lankas in one day: ancient ruins in the morning, wild elephants in the afternoon.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Snapshot - What's Included

- Polonnaruwa UNESCO World Heritage site visit
- Minneriya National Park jeep safari
- Dinner at the hotel

ITINERARY

DAY 4
Sigiriya and Village Visit

After breakfast, we set out early to climb Sigiriya Rock Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Known as Lion Rock, this 5th-century fortress rises 200 metres above the surrounding jungle, with moats and water gardens at its base. On the way up, we see the Heavenly Maidens frescoes in a sheltered section of the rock face before taking in the views from the summit.
We then take a tractor ride along village paths and cross a lake by canoe. Local women show us how they prepare traditional dishes, and we sit down to a village lunch. Afterwards, we take a tuk-tuk or jeep back to our tour vehicle and return to the hotel for dinner.

Encounter Moment *From a rock fortress to a village kitchen. Today is one of the fullest days of the journey.*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Snapshot - What's Included
- Sigiriya Rock Fortress visit (UNESCO World Heritage site)
- Village tractor and canoe ride
- Cooking demonstration with local women
- Traditional village lunch
- Dinner at the hotel

DAY 5
Dambulla to Kandy via Matale

This morning we depart for Kandy, stopping in Matale to visit a spice and herb garden, a wonderful introduction to the crops that have shaped Sri Lanka's history and cuisine. We enjoy lunch at the village before moving on to a nearby temple, where we are welcomed for a discussion with a Buddhist monk on the philosophy of Buddhism.
On arrival in Kandy, there is time to relax or explore at the hotel.
Encounter Moment *Spices, monks and mountain roads. A day that moves through many layers of Sri Lankan life.*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Snapshot - What's Included
- Spice and herb garden visit, Matale
- Lunch at the village
- Temple visit and conversation with a Buddhist monk
- Dinner at the hotel



DAY 6
Kandy

A full day in Kandy, beginning with a walking orientation tour of the city followed by a visit to the magnificent Peradeniya Botanical Gardens. At 147 acres, it is an extraordinary collection of trees, plants and flowers, first established as a royal pleasure garden and later expanded by the British.

The afternoon is yours to explore, relax or venture out at your own pace. This evening we visit the Temple of the Tooth Relic, one of the most sacred Buddhist sites in Asia, before gathering to watch a cultural performance of traditional Sri Lankan dance. Tonight is something a little special: dinner at a local family home, a warm and personal way to end a full day in the city.
Encounter Moment A full day in one of Sri Lanka's most beloved cities, with a spectacular evening to close it.

Meals: Breakfast, Local Family Dinner

Snapshot - What's Included
- Walking orientation tour of Kandy
- Peradeniya Botanical Gardens visit
- Free time in the afternoon
- Temple of the Tooth Relic visit
- Traditional Kandyan dance performance
- Dinner at a local family home

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ITINERARY

DAY 7
Kandy to Nuwara Eliya

After breakfast we depart for Nuwara Eliya by road, stopping en route to visit a tea plantation and factory. The tour takes us through the process of turning freshly picked tea leaves into the finished product, and we have the chance to enjoy a cup brewed straight from the factory. On arrival we check in to our grand colonial hotel in Nuwara Eliya, in time for a late afternoon high tea. Encounter Moment Hill country air, a tea factory, and high tea at a grand old hotel. Some days just work.

Meals: Breakfast, Packed Lunch, High Tea

Snapshot - What's Included
- Transfer Kandy to Nuwara Eliya by road
- Tea plantation and factory visit
- Packed lunch
- Afternoon high tea at the Grand Hotel

DAY 8
Nuwara Eliya to Udawalawe

An early breakfast before we transfer to Ambewela railway station to board the morning train for a scenic journey through tea country and past waterfalls on the way to Ella. This is one of the most celebrated rail routes in Sri Lanka, and it is easy to see why.

On arrival at Ella, we transfer to Udawalawe via Wellawaya, checking in to our hotel with the rest of the day at leisure. Dinner at the hotel.

Encounter Moment One of the world's great train journeys, and a landscape that changes with every kilometre.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Snapshot - What's Included
- Scenic train journey, Ambewela to Ella
- Transfer Ella to Udawalawe via Wellawaya
- Dinner at the hotel

DAY 9
Udawalawe

We rise early this morning for a dawn jeep safari in Udawalawe National Park, one of the most reliable places in Asia to see wild elephants year-round. Herds of up to 50 roam the open plains and riverbanks, and the park is also home to leopards, toque monkeys, spotted deer, wild pig, and a remarkable range of birds including the white-bellied sea eagle and crested serpent eagle. In the afternoon we visit the Elephant Transit Home, established in 1995 to care for orphaned and abandoned baby elephants until they are ready to be returned to the wild. It is an affecting experience, unhurried and quietly moving. Dinner at the hotel.
Encounter Moment *Wild elephants at dawn, orphaned calves in the afternoon. A day that stays with you.*
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Snapshot - What's Included
- Dawn jeep safari, Udawalawe National Park
- Elephant Transit Home visit
- Dinner at the hotel

DAY 10
Udawalawe to Galle via Weligama

After breakfast we head for the coast, stopping at Weligama to watch the stilt fishermen perched on their wooden poles above the waves, a tradition that has endured for generations.

On arrival in Galle we check in to our hotel before an afternoon sightseeing tour of the Galle Dutch Fortress, a living 17th-century walled city of cobbled streets, colonial architecture and sea views in every direction. You'll have time to wander the fort's cobbled streets, browse the shops or find a spot to sit and take it all in. We will then meet up again to transfer back to our hotel for dinner.

Encounter Moment *From the inland plains to the Indian Ocean. The south coast of Sri Lanka is something else entirely.*

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Snapshot - What's Included
- Stop to observe the stilt fishermen at Weligama
- Galle Dutch Fortress sightseeing tour
- Free time in the fortress to explore at your own pace
- Dinner at the hotel

ITINERARY

DAY 11
Galle, Madu River and Kosgoda

After breakfast at the hotel, we head north along the coast to Balapitiya for a cruise on the Madu River.

We travel by canopied motorboat past mangrove-covered islets, pausing to view a 200-year-old temple and watch locals cultivating cinnamon. We can also see demonstrations of coir production and rope-making and, with a bit of luck, catch some traditional fishing techniques in action. We visit the Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery before returning to Galle for dinner at a local restaurant in the fort. After dinner, we head back to our hotel.

Encounter Moment A gentle morning on the water. Mangroves, temples, turtles and cinnamon.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Snapshot - What's Included
- Madu River cruise by canopied motorboat
- Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery visit
- Dinner at a local restaurant in Galle Fort

DAY 12
Galle

A day of genuine leisure in Galle. The morning is yours. Perhaps a stroll through the fort's atmospheric streets, a visit to one of its galleries or boutiques, or simply time to sit with a coffee and watch the world go by from a rooftop cafe. Use the time however it suits you best. Dinner at the hotel.

Encounter Moment A day with no agenda. Perhaps the most valuable day of all.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Snapshot - What's Included
- A full day at leisure in Galle
- Dinner at the hotel

DAY 13
Galle to Colombo

After breakfast we leave Galle for Colombo via the expressway.



An afternoon sightseeing tour introduces us to the city, from the busy streets of Fort and Pettah bazaar to the leafy avenues of Cinnamon Gardens. We stop to visit a Hindu temple, then pass the Jami Ul-Alfar Mosque, Wolvendaal Dutch Church and the Hulftsdorp Law Courts on our way to Cinnamon Gardens. From there we take in Independence Square and the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall before visiting Gangaramaya Temple.

This evening we gather for farewell dinner with a glass of wine or beer, and a fitting close to our Sri Lankan Encounter.

Meals: Breakfast, Farewell Dinner

Snapshot - What's Included
- Transfer Galle to Colombo via expressway (approx. 2.5 hours)
- Colombo city sightseeing tour: Fort, Pettah, Cinnamon Gardens, Independence Square
- Gangaramaya Temple visit
- Farewell dinner: Vertical Lounge at Elevate Restaurant

ENCOUNTER SRI LANKA 'SOLOS ONLY'

DAY 14
Colombo, Departure

A final breakfast together before your Sri Lankan Encounter comes to a close. Private or group transfers to the airport are arranged to connect with your onward flight.

Meals: Breakfast

Special Notes
- Late hotel checkout is available for evening departures at an additional charge.
- Transfer to Colombo Airport (allow 1 hour)

GETTING THERE

Start Location: Negombo, Sri Lanka
End Location: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Airport: Bandaranaike International Airport (CMB) commonly known as Colombo Airport .

First Day
Arrival day commences with a 3PM tour meet up at our group hotel.

Final Day
There are no tour excursions on the final day.

Hotel Check In/Out Times
Consider the hotel check in time on arrival and the hotel check out time on departure. If you arrive prior to the check in time, the hotel will store your luggage until the check in time and can also store your luggage until you are ready to depart for your onward journey.

Check in: most hotels have check in from 2PM or 3PM
Check out: most hotels require check out by 11AM or 12 midday



AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Airport Transfers are included on arrival and departure
Transfer Conditions

- You arrive on day 1 of the tour, and depart on the final day
- Transfers are also included when pre or post tour accommodation is booked through us at the designated group hotel.
- If you've arranged your own accommodation, airport transfers are not included and will be your own responsibility.
- If you are booking your own flights (and not through us), we require your complete flight itinerary at least 45 days prior to departure, even if you are not booking a transfer with us.
- Where transfers are included in your arrangements, failure to provide your flight details within the required timeframe may result in forfeiture of the transfer or incur additional charges.

Information in this itinerary and on our website is prepared with care and is correct at the time of publishing. Travel arrangements can change due to circumstances outside our control, such as weather, transport timetables or supplier changes. If a significant change affects your trip, we will let you know and offer suitable alternatives where we can. Your final travel documents supersede any earlier information, so please check them carefully before departure and tell us straight away if anything looks incorrect so we can fix it.

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