

# **CULTURAL TRIANGLE & SAFARI WEEKEND TRIP**

## WEEKEND OVERVIEW

Located in the central region of Sri Lanka, the Cultural Triangle is the focal point for any visit to Sri Lanka. A treasure trove of ruins, rocks and wildlife, the weekend trip will encompass 3 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and allow you to learn all about Sri Lanka's rich culture and history.

Jump onboard a 4x4 to search through the tropical forests, grasslands and wetlands for elephants, leopards and other animals. Sri Lanka has recently been voted the best country outside of Africa for safaris, so you're guaranteed an amazing experience!

Not only this, but we will climb the spectacular rock citadel of Sigiriya (Lions Rock), perhaps Sri Lanka's single most extraordinary sight and complete our trip by visiting the world-famous city of Kandy!

This action-packed weekend trip will provide something new and exciting every day. As a group, we will explore everything this incredible region has to offer, including:

- Heading off on safari in search of elephants and other animals in Minneriya or Kaudulla National Park
- Climbing the famous Lions Rock in Sigiriya
- Exploring the mysterious cave temples of Dambulla
- Learning about the spice plantations in Matale
- Visiting the Temple of Tooth, the sacred Buddhist temple in Kandy
- Admiring the views from above and shopping in Kandy

The structured weekend trip will ensure you see as much of Sri Lanka as possible. You will be transported by private minibus to maximise comfort and to keep transit times to a minimum.

A member of the TMR team will accompany you throughout the trip and English-speaking guides will show you around all of the sites, so you get to fully appreciate their history and cultural significance.

The trips are open to all TMR volunteers with at least 5 people travelling – a guaranteed fantastic social experience.

Each weekend trip leaves on a Friday morning and returns on the Sunday evening, costing just **£195 / \$270 per person.**

The following are included within this fee:

- All transport by private mini-bus
- Accommodation
- Three meals per day
- All entrance fees

## START DATES

We will be running the cultural triangle and safari weekend trip on the following dates:

**26<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024 – 25<sup>th</sup> February 2024**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 – 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024**  
**26<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024**  
**24<sup>th</sup> May 2024 – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2024**  
**21<sup>st</sup> June 2024 – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024**  
**26<sup>th</sup> July 2024 – 28<sup>th</sup> July 2024**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> August 2024 – 25<sup>th</sup> August 2024**  
**27<sup>th</sup> September 2024 – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2024**  
**25<sup>th</sup> October 2024 – 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024 – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2024**  
**27<sup>th</sup> December 2024 – 29<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

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We can add additional weekend trips if there is enough interest from volunteers. There is a minimum of 5 participants.

## **BOOKING YOUR PLACE**

You can simply add this weekend trip when applying for any of our programmes in Sri Lanka under 'Optional Extras'.

If you have already signed up for one of our volunteer programmes in Sri Lanka and would like to add this weekend trip, you can simply request this within your My Trip account.

**Places on our weekend trips are non-refundable and non-transferable between volunteers.**

## **ITINERARY**

### **DAY 1 – TRAVELLING & SAFARI**

We will be up early today as we make the long drive North to Dambulla.

After getting something to eat for lunch, we will set off on a 4x4 jeep safari in the nearby national park. We will either visit Minneriya or Kaudulla National Park, depending on the time of year will dictate where the elephants are located.

This is an incredible opportunity to spot the 200+ elephants in their natural habitat, as well as monkeys, crocodiles and maybe even a leopard!

After an exciting afternoon, we will make the short journey to Sigirya where we will check into the hotel and have something to eat.

### **DAY 2 – LIONS ROCK, DAMBULLA CAVES & MATALE SPICE PLANTATIONS**

We will spend the morning by visiting the Sigiriya Rock Fortress, also known as Mount Of Remembrance. We will get to climb and explore the wonders of this former cultural capital that is built on top of a 180-metre-high granite rock known as 'Lions Rock'. On a small plateau about halfway up, you will come across the gateway which is in the form of an enormous lion which leads up to ancient graffiti and elaborate water gardens.

After enjoying the panoramic views of Lions Rock, we will head North to Dambulla Caves – another World Heritage Site. This 2000-year-old operating temple has five separate caves that contain around 150 stunning Buddha statues and paintings.

We will then make our way to Kandy. On route, we will stop at Matale to learn more about Sri Lankan spice plantations and herbal massages.

### **DAY 3 – KANDY, TEMPLE OF TOOTH & SHOPPING**

You will wake up in the World Heritage City of Kandy that has many iconic sites and a rich cultural history. We will visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth that houses the most important Buddhist relic in the world – a tooth of Buddha. On entering the temple you will be awed by the elaborate carvings and intricate decorations, a complete contrast to the exterior. After leaving your lotus blossom as an offering we will move on.

You will have some free time in Kandy to go shopping or enjoy your surroundings. As you walk around Kandy lake be sure to feed the thousands of fishes that follow you and to keep an eye out for the many bats sleeping in the trees!

After lunch, we will head back to Akurala in time for dinner.



## ACCOMMODATION

Over the course of the weekend you will be staying in hotels or guesthouses. All of the accommodation will be basic but clean and comfortable and perfect for getting a good night's rest.

Rooms will be on a shared basis, with up to 4 volunteers staying in one room. Please note, from time to time some volunteers may be required to share a double bed depending on availability.

You will have all of the amenities you need, such as western toilets, hot water and Wi-Fi – although this may be intermittent.

## MEALS

You'll be provided with three meals per day throughout the weekend trip. Meals will generally be local Sri Lankan cuisine and served at either the guesthouse or a local restaurant.

Drinks are not provided and will need to be purchased at your own expense. A big bottle of water typically costs under 50p.

## TRANSPORT

You will travel around Sri Lanka by private minibus. Depending on the group size, this may either be a large 27 seater bus or a smaller van that can seat 8.

A member of our local team will accompany you throughout the weekend trip and you will have English-speaking tour guides to take you around all of the sites.

**If you want to take part on this amazing trip and the dates fall on your last weekend in Sri Lanka then you can still take part! Please arrange your return flight from Sri Lanka for Monday to ensure you have sufficient time to get to the airport. The accommodation on your last night is not included but we can recommend several hotels either close to our accommodation or to the airport.**

