

Sri Lanka on a Shoestring

Country(ies): Sri Lanka

Tour type: Shoestring

Transport: A/C minivan/minibus, public transport inc. trains

Group size: Min: 4 | Max: 20

Days: 13 days

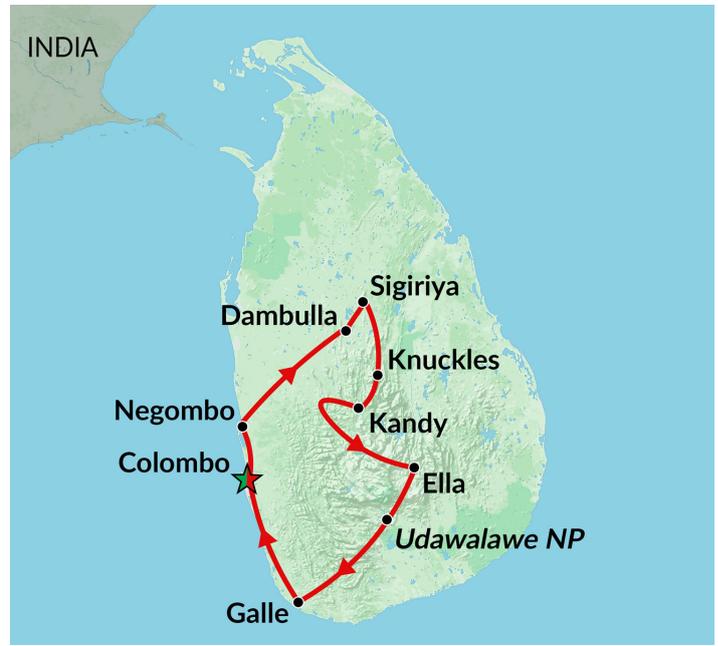
Start Location: Colombo, Sri Lanka

End Location: Colombo, Sri Lanka

Meals: Breakfasts - 11, Lunches - 1, Dinners - 0

Highlights:

Colombo, Negombo, & Dambulla, Sigiriya, Knuckles, Kandy, Kitulgala, Ella, Unawatuna, Galle



Itinerary

Day 1: Welcome to Colombo. Colombo evening walking tour

Kick off your Sri Lankan journey by meeting your Adventure Leader in the lobby of your Colombo hostel. Store your luggage and join the pre-departure briefing, where you'll go over the exciting itinerary and start getting to know your fellow adventurers.

Dive into Colombo's vibrant past! Embark on an evening walking tour through the historic old town, uncovering its rich history and unique culture.

OVERNIGHT: Colombo hostel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS:

Day 2: Negombo fish market, Sputnik volunteer centre and Dambulla Cave Temple complex

Start your day with a vibrant visit to Negombo's famous "Lellama" fish market. Mingle with local fishermen at this bustling beachside market and witness the lively daily fish auction.

Next, journey to Kurunegala and discover The Sputnik Centre, a hub of community engagement and youth empowerment. Immerse yourself in Sri Lanka's inspiring initiatives and volunteer activities; witness language courses, community programs, and lively table tennis matches. Meet the dedicated volunteers who make a difference.

Afterward, journey to Dambulla and explore the ancient Dambulla Cave Temple complex, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Discover caves transformed into temples centuries ago and then relax at your hostel for the evening.

OVERNIGHT: Dambulla hostel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS:

Day 3: Sigiriya fortress hike. Optional cycling excursion to Polonnaruwa

Discover Sri Lanka's rich history as you head northeast to Sigiriya, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Hike to the top of the ancient rock fortress, once the capital of King Kashyapa I (477-495 AD). Soak in the panoramic views and explore the captivating ruins.

The afternoon is yours to continue exploring Sigiriya, or embark on an optional excursion to Polonnaruwa, another UNESCO treasure. Cycle amidst the ruins of this medieval capital, admiring its monuments and palaces.

Cap off your day with a relaxing evening at your Dambulla guesthouse, perhaps enjoying a taste of traditional arrack.

OVERNIGHT: Dambulla hostel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 4: Hike the Manigala Trail in the Knuckles Mountain Range. Head to Kandy

Embark on a scenic journey to the Knuckles Mountain Range, known for its unusual peaks shaped like a clenched fist. Trek along the breathtaking Manigala Trail, surrounded by the rich biodiversity of the cloud forest. Enjoy a packed lunch with panoramic views.

Later, bid farewell to the mountains and head for Kandy, Sri Lanka's bustling hill capital where you'll have free time to discover its fascinating mix of historical and modern architecture and end your day in one of the vibrant pubs.

OVERNIGHT: Kandy hostel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS:

Day 5: Free morning in Kandy. Afternoon Kitulgala rainforest rafting

Begin your day with an optional visit to the iconic Temple of the Tooth, once a royal palace and now Sri Lanka's holiest temple, enshrining the tooth relic of Lord Buddha. The temple is within walking distance and can easily be visited this morning.

In the afternoon, say goodbye to the hill capital and get ready for an adrenaline-pumping thrill as we go white water rafting through the Kitulgala rainforest.

OVERNIGHT: Kitulgala hostel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 6: Scenic train journey to Ella. Hike Little Adams Peak

This morning, board a train for a breathtaking ride to Ella. This world-renowned route winds through lush tea plantations, forests, and villages, offering stunning views of Sri Lanka's central hills.

Following our arrival we'll take an easy hike to Adams Peak. As you ascend, you'll pass through lush tea plantations and scenic landscapes. The summit provides panoramic views of the surrounding valleys, Ella Rock, and the picturesque town of Ella.

Explore charming Ella in the evening, discovering its shops, pubs, and restaurants.

OVERNIGHT: Ella hostel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 7: Hike the 15th and 16th stages of the Pekoe Trail

Embark on a scenic adventure through Sri Lanka's hill country with a hike along stages 15 and 16 of the Pekoe Trail. After a convenient 30-minute transfer and fueled by a packed breakfast, your journey begins at the serene Makulella Buddhist temple, overlooking the Ambagaswatte valley.

Stage 15 leads you through diverse landscapes, from fragrant eucalyptus forests and verdant tea plantations to hidden jungle paths, culminating at the summit of Ella Rock. Here, panoramic views of Ella Gap and Little Adam's Peak await. Descend into the charming town of Ella before embarking on Stage 16, a captivating walk through the Ella Forest Reserve.

This stage takes you past the iconic Nine Arches Bridge and along picturesque village roads, offering glimpses of renowned tea estates like Newburgh and Demodara. Your trek concludes at the fascinating Demodara Railway Loop, a marvel of engineering.

You'll have the evening free to explore Ella.

OVERNIGHT: Ella hostel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 8: Sri Lankan cooking class. Optional Yoga lesson

Immerse yourself in the vibrant culinary traditions of Sri Lanka with a hands-on cooking class this morning. Led by a local expert, you'll delve into the secrets of Sri Lankan cuisine, learning to prepare authentic dishes bursting with flavour and aroma. Discover the art of blending exotic spices, using fresh ingredients and mastering traditional cooking techniques. From fragrant curries to delectable sambals, you'll create a feast for the senses and gain a deeper appreciation for the island's rich culinary heritage.

This afternoon offers the perfect opportunity to unwind and explore at your own pace. Wander through the charming streets, browse local markets for unique souvenirs, or simply relax and soak up the atmosphere. For those seeking a more mindful experience, join our optional yoga class. This rejuvenating session will help you reconnect with your body and find inner peace amidst the serene surroundings. Stretch, breathe and unwind as you immerse yourself in the calming practice of yoga.

OVERNIGHT: Ella hostel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 9: 'Mini World' hike, Buduruvagala temple and jeep safari in Udawalawe NP

Prepare for another breathtaking sunrise adventure as you hike to Mini World! This thrilling viewpoint boasts panoramic vistas and a dramatic 1192-meter drop.

After freshening up at the hostel, we'll journey to Udawalawe, Sri Lanka's wildlife haven. En-route, we'll immerse ourselves in the serenity of Buduruvagala Ancient Temple, famed for its 10th-century rock-carved Buddha statues. Then get ready for an exhilarating jeep safari in Udawalawe National Park – keep watch for majestic elephants, crocodiles, vibrant birdlife, and more!

OVERNIGHT: Udawalawe campsite

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 10: Head to Handunugoda Tea Estate before unwinding on Unawatuna beach

Experience the heart of Sri Lanka's renowned tea culture! After breakfast, journey to the Handunugoda Tea Estate and delve into the fascinating process of tea-making, from the fields to your cup. Explore the historic factory and museum, then savor a freshly brewed cup of tea.

Continue along the scenic southern coast to Unawatuna, a world-class beach destination. Unwind in the evening, exploring this vibrant surf town and relaxing at your hostel.

OVERNIGHT: Unawatuna hostel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 11: Surfing lesson. Afternoon traditional mask painting workshop

Embrace a day of sun, sand, and surf! Relax on the beach before catching some waves in your exciting surf lesson. Note: Sri Lanka's ideal surf season is December to April. If conditions aren't suitable, you'll receive a full refund in local currency for this activity.

Unleash your creativity this afternoon with traditional Sri Lankan mask painting. Ancient beliefs state that once created, these masks possess healing and protective qualities.

OVERNIGHT: Unawatuna hostel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 12: Tuk-tuk to Galle to explore Galle Fort City

Hop into a tuk-tuk and journey to Galle, Sri Lanka's bustling southern city! Discover Galle Fort City, a UNESCO World Heritage site showcasing a fascinating blend of architectural styles. Built by the Portuguese in the 16th century, the fort stands as a testament to history. Explore well-preserved ramparts, a lighthouse, clock tower, and buildings transformed into charming restaurants, villas, and boutiques. Immerse yourself in the city, then witness a breathtaking sunset from the fort's ramparts before returning to Unawatuna.

OVERNIGHT: Unawatuna hostel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 13: Partake in a Pooja Blessing Ritual and return to Colombo where our tour ends

Your Sri Lanka adventure comes to an end today. As you journey back to Colombo, a stop at a temple offers a chance to meet a Buddhist priest and experience a traditional pooja (blessing ritual) before departing Sri Lanka.

Bid farewell to your newfound friends and prepare for your journey home.

Your tour comes to an end after arriving back into Colombo. Extra nights can be arranged.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Included:

- All accommodation (including hostels and guesthouses)
- All transport whilst in Sri Lanka (excludes airport transfers)
- Evening walking tour of the old town of Colombo (Colombo)
- Negombo to visit the fish market (Negombo)
- Dambulla Cave Complex (Dambulla)
- Sigiriya Rock Fortress hike (Sigiriya)
- A glass Sri Lanka's favourite alcohol, Arrack (Dambulla)
- Hike along the scenic Manigala Trail (Knuckles)
- Sunset visit to Kandy Lake (Kandy)
- The Sputnik Centre (Kurunegala, Kandy)
- White Water rafting (Kitulgala)
- Train from Hatton to Ella (Ella)
- Ella Rock hike at sunrise (Ella)
- Visit Rawana Falls (Ella)
- Hike to Mini-worlds end at sunrise (Ella)
- Sri Lankan Cookery Class (Ella)
- Visit the Buduruvagala Ancient Temple (Ella to Udawalawe)
- Jeep safari into Udawalawe National Park (Udawalawe)
- Visit to Handunugoda Tea Estate (Handunugoda)
- Surf lesson (Unawatuna)
- Tuk-tuk ride to Galle, for Galle Fort City (Galle)
- Visit temple to meet a Buddhist priest and take part in a pooja (blessing ritual) (Unawatuna - Colombo)
- A bilingual, epic Adventure Leader throughout the entire trip
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

Excluded:

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Arrival & Departure Airport Transfers
- Any activities during free time in Sigiriya, Kandy, Ella, Unawatuna
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for driver and/or tour guide
- Any other items not mentioned above

Notes

Similar tours:

The following tours also feature this trip as part of an extended itinerary:

- [Temples & Tigers](#) - follows the same itinerary but includes an additional extension to see tigers in Ranthambore NP.
- [Best of India](#) - follows the same itinerary but includes an additional extension to explore tropical Kerala in the south of India
- [Taj to Varanasi](#) - follows the same itinerary but includes an additional extension to the holy city of Varanasi

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

No Options

1. Accommodation

The accommodation used on the tour is a mix of simple stays in hostels (dorms) simple guesthouses and one night camping. Each have their own charm, and at the same time are safe, clean, and hygienic. All have good showers, internet, and some have washing machines. The price is based on same-sex shared rooms in these hostels and accommodations, All bedding is provided - you do not need to bring a sleeping bag. Luggage is tagged and stored securely while we are out exploring during the day. The majority of other people staying in the hostels will be young people aged 18 to 35 and travelling on a budget. It's easy to make new friends and have fun meeting in the lounge areas. You can also upgrade to a private or twin room subject to availability at the time of booking. This may not extend to all the accommodation throughout the trip. Please contact us if you would like more information.

Additional nights are available on request in the hostels used at the start and finish of the tour - please contact us for prices and to book.

2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. On this tour, the majority of transportation is in private vehicles, however some sections may be operated using local public transport such as buses and trains.

What time are the driving durations?

Colombo – Negombo: 30 minutes

Negombo – Dambulla: 3.5 hours

Dambulla – Knuckles Mountain Range: 1.5 hours

Knuckles Mountain Range – Kandy: 2 hours

Kandy – Kitulgala: 2 hours

Kitulgala – Hatton – Ella: 1.5 hours by road, 3 hrs by train

Ella – Udawalawe: 1.5 hours

Udawalawe – Handunugoda: 2 hours

Handunugoda – Unawatuna: 30 mins

Unawatuna – Colombo: 2 hours

What is it like on public transport?

Throughout your time in Sri Lanka, you'll be using private transfers. However, transfer between Hatton to Ella will be completed by train.

3. Transfers

Arrival and Departure airport transfers are not included in the cost of this tour, but can be added as additional options. Please check the options section of the tour page for further details.

4. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

This tour is accompanied by English speaking tour leaders. These all have the knowledge and passion to help make sure you have a great time in all the places visited during the tour. We may sometimes use more than one leader for different sections of the tour but often the same person will accompany you throughout. Where they do not travel with you between locations, they will help you board and see you off, and you'll be met on your arrival at the next destination.

Each tour leader is an expert in all things Sri Lanka. However, they are not licensed tour guides.

Specialist tour guides are available at many of the sites we visit along the way if you would like some more in depth information about particular sites.

5. Group Size & Operation

The minimum number of travellers required for the tour to run is 4, with a maximum group size of 20.

This is an active, backpacking style tour, and there is a lot of walking and physical activity involved. We therefore set a minimum age of 16 and maximum age limit of 55. Children aged 15 or under may be accepted in some circumstances.

This tour is operated in conjunction with one of our tour operator partners specialising in this region so you may join with travellers booking through different companies and from different countries. This can make for some really interesting groups and new people to meet.

6. Meals

What kind of restaurants will we go to?

Your Adventure Leader will take you to small local cafes/shops serving Sri Lankan food.

I'm a vegetarian/have allergies – will I be able to get the right food?

Yes! Vegetarian food is a part of the Sri Lankan diet, and with so many food choices available, even individuals with allergies and/or special dietary needs can get food. Just tell your Adventure Leader and they can help you find something suitable. You will probably discover a new dish that you love!

7. Entrance Fees

The cost of entrance fees to the sites included on this tour are included in the tour price. If you decide to visit anything during your free time, the cost of these entrance fees are not included.

8. Dates & Prices

We run departures on our Indian tours throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 4 travellers. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website (please check the website for up-to-date prices and special offers).

Private and tailor-made tours are available on any dates and may be adjusted to fit your personal requirements, available time and budget.

9. Tipping and Haggling

Haggling is a traditional necessity, so its wise not to pay too much regard to initial prices. Instead fix an items value in your mind then negotiate towards it unhurriedly and don't be afraid to simply walk away if the price isn't right. Once you have offered a price though, you should be prepared to pay it as you may cause offence if you then back out.

While an accepted part of the culture and customs in Sri Lanka, tipping is always optional, and the amounts paid should reflect excellent service. We are often asked for advice on common amounts, and for assistance with tipping. Some suggested guidelines are given below.

Restaurants and taxis: Local markets and basic restaurants - leave the loose change. More up-market restaurants we suggest 5% to 10% of your bill.

Local guides: Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide in addition to your tour guide. We suggest USD 3-5 per person per day for local guides.

Drivers: You may have a range of private drivers on your trip. Some may be with you for a short journey while others may be with you for several days. We would suggest a higher tip for those more involved with the group, for example if you don't have an extra accompanying guide. However USD 2-3 per person per day is generally appropriate if you have a guide and a driver. If they are a driver/guide, performing both functions, then USD 5-10 per person per day is appropriate.

10. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

11. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

12. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water

bottles).

- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

13. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

<https://x.com/encounterstravl> (yes, without the 'e')

14. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? [World Nomads Travel Insurance](#) offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.

15. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may

occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign which provides further useful and invaluable information.



16. Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.

- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

17. Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please [contact us](#).

18. Voltage

In Nepal, India and Sri Lanka, sockets are mainly two round pronged and 230 volts (Type C,D,M). In Bhutan a range of different sockets can be found, including two and three round pronged and three flat pronged (Type D,F,G).

Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard UK-European adaptors will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are sometimes available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already but cannot be guaranteed.

If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

19. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with

vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

Sri Lanka: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an endemic country.

Malaria: Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting. In general though is generally considered low enough risk that anti-malarial tablets are not necessary for most travellers doing relatively short tours of Sri Lanka.

Yellow Fever: This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination may be required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this US CDC information about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate with you and to hand if necessary.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have.

20. Passports and Visas - Sri Lanka

Your passport expiry date must be at least 6 months after your time in Sri Lanka finishes. Do not bring a full or almost expired passport. You must also have a machine-readable passport or you may be denied entry. If you have an old-style manually issued passport you will need to replace this with a new machine-readable passport before you travel.

Most nationalities (including UK, USA, European, Australian, Canadian) will need to arrange their Sri Lankan tourist visa in advance. A new online e-visa system is available which makes the process more straightforward than before. You can make your application online here... [Electronic Travel Authorization](#)

Visa requirements for Sri Lanka can and do change regularly and we suggest that you arrange your Indian visa early and re-check your specific visa requirements prior to travel for any changes.

Note: Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.
