

2023

BESPOKE
RALLIES

2023

1,974 KMS IN 23 DAYS


SRI LANKA

THE LAND OF LIMITLESS BEAUTY

JANUARY 2023

THE LAND OF LIMITLESS BEAUTY

Marco Polo called Sri Lanka the most beautiful island in the world and he was right. Here there are stunning views from high peaks, tropical rainforest teeming with fantastic and prolific animals, a delightful people now reunited after a gruelling 20 year war.

The cultural triangle between Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Dambulla is a jungle-covered plain strewn with granite boulders 200m high, with a profusion of wildlife, exotic plants and World Heritage Sites. The forests are mostly teak, mahogany, ebony and names like rosewood and satinwood that you only come across in antique shops. On the outskirts of villages are mangoes and papayas, cloves and cinnamon and profusion of wild flowers, animals and birds.

It's a country of rare beauty and diversity and is a jewel in our crown of rallies.


**BESPOKE
RALLIES**

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Day 01 Arrive at Colombo Airport

You will be met at Colombo Airport and taken to your hotel. Change money in the airport

Day 02 Colombo

Collect car and Driving license. Walking tour of old Colombo.

Day 03 Colombo to Galle - 158kms

After breakfast we take to the roads for the first time to Millaniya, a remote village just outside Colombo where we see traditional village life. On show is Cinnamon production, rubber tapping in a small plantation and a local oil making process. Following that we visit a Moonstone mine.

Day 04 Galle Day off

A chance to look round Galle Fort and enjoy the bustling town. The narrow streets are lined with Dutch merchant villas, pillared verandas, carved doors and windows. You can get lost walking round the narrow streets where gemstone shops abound, next to restaurants, cafes and juice shops.

Day 05 Galle to Yala - 168kms

In the morning we drive to Mirissa beach for a spot of whale watching followed by a visit to Dondre, the most southerly point of Sri Lanka. On the way to Yala we drive through Bundala National Park.

Day 06 Yala Day off - Safari day

Early start for a Safari in Yala National Park to search for the elusive Leopard. Back to the hotel for breakfast then relax in the beautiful surroundings of the Jetwing Yala. If you are up for another Safari, there is an afternoon drive as well.

Day 07 Yala to Udawalawe - 98kms

After a lazy Breakfast/early lunch we drive to Udawalawe. It's a relatively short drive so there's time after arrival for a drive around Udawalawe National Park - this is a must. Udawalawe is one of the best elephant sanctuaries in the world. Plenty of wild elephants here plus a multitude of other wildlife.

Day 08 Udawalawe to Haputale - 143kms

After breakfast we visit the nearby Elephant Transit Home where orphaned elephants are brought up with the aim of returning them to the wild. We are there at morning feeding time. Afterwards back to the hotel to collect bags and then we head for the lush green hills on narrow winding roads. Lunch in Rakwana in a private house. Akway Hotel

is perched on a hillside with amazing views across the southern mountains.

Day 09 Haputale Day off to explore - 92kms

A stunning drive up to Lipton Seat. On the way we stop off at the Dambettana tea factory and then take tuk-tuks to Lipton Seat viewpoint. Afterwards we visit the dramatic Diyaluma waterfalls at Koslanda. Option of a short trek to the top of the waterfall. Or take a train ride to Ella through the hills.

Day 10 Haputale - Horton Plains - Nuwara Eliya - 70kms

A mere 70 kms today but it's an all-day drive! First we tackle the amazing Devil's Staircase. Incredible views and tough roads making a fabulous drive. We arrive at Horton Plains at noon for a well earned break. If the weather is good we take the 9km walk around the plains which includes the amazing World's End which has the finest view in all of Sri Lanka where the awesome escarpment drops vertically for about 4,000 feet. The Grand Hotel lives up to its name as it's an impressive colonial building still serving afternoon tea. Can be cool here - not called Little England for nothing.

Day 11 Nuwara Eliya Day off to explore - 15kms

A gentle day to explore the local Lover's Leap waterfall, Pidurutalagala, the highest point in Sri Lanka at 2524metres (8281 feet), the Pedro Tea factory and the Aadishakti Seeta Amman Temple.

Day 12 Nuwara Eliya to Kandy - 98kms

Today we have a leisurely drive to Kandy, home of the last ruler, King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe. Kandy is now a World Heritage Site being the last royal capital of Sri Lankan kings. Naturally we don't take the main road but drive through the hills past numerous manicured tea plantations and their factories. Our hotel is outside the hectic Kandy town high above in the hills. Great location.

Day 13 Kandy day off

First must do in Kandy is to visit the wonderful Botanical Gardens. Set in 147 acres its highlights include a fine collection of orchids, a stately avenue of royal palms, the extraordinary, aptly named cannonball fruit tree and 40m-high Burma bamboo. Another big hit is the giant Javan fig tree on the great lawn, with its colossal central trunk and umbrella-like canopy of branches. Lunch

to be had in the café by the Great Lawn. Later in the day visit the Temple of the Tooth where a tooth of Buddha is locked away in a casket.

Day 14 Kandy to Sigiriya - 123kms

After breakfast we drive to Sigiriya through the Knuckles Mountain range. Once again a beautiful route through rolling tea plantations. After the Pitakanada Tea Estate the views are spectacular. En route we visit the Isiwaya Ayurvedic Village spice gardens. We will include a cooking demonstration as well as a foot massage for the weary ones. After this we continue to Sigiriya via the Damballa Rock Temple. Our hotel is 1 km wide and built into the rocks. Stunning.

Day 15 Sigiriya rest day - 44kms

No rest today as we visit one of the most spectacular monuments in Sri Lanka, the Sigiriya Rock Fortress. Step through the gigantic 'Lion Paws' overlooking the symmetrical royal gardens below. A truly colossal masterpiece of the age. Go to the museum first to get the history and your bearings. Climbing the rock looks daunting but it is cleverly managed in stages. Views from the top are spectacular (again).

Day 16 Sigiriya to Polonnaruwa to Trincomalee - 187kms

After breakfast we drive to Polonnaruwa the medieval capital and crown jewel of King Parakramabahu I (1153-86). The second most ancient of Sri Lanka's kingdoms, Polonnaruwa was first declared the capital city by King Vijayabahu I, who defeated Chola invaders in 1070 to reunite the country once more under a local leader. Follow this with a visit to the reclining Buddha and wood carving workshop. We suggest lunch on the road in the Thidas Arana restaurant.

Day 17 Trincomalee rest day

At leisure to enjoy the beach or simply take a rest.

Day 18 Trincomalee to Jaffna - 230kms

Drive to Jaffna. En route visit War Monuments. Evening visit Point Pedro - the most northern point of Sri Lanka

Day 19 Jaffna to Anuradhapura - 304kms

We take the coastal route from Jaffna to Mannar and drive to Adam's Bridge, the nearest point to India and where a bead of islands may once have connected the two countries. Lunch is overlooking Adam's



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Bridge. From there we go proceed west to Anuradhapura, one of the ancient capitals of Sri Lanka. It has some very fine ruins.

Day 20 Anuradhapura rest day

There are options today. For those wanting nature rather than ruins there is Wilpattu where, once again, you can go on Safari for Leopards. Those who want ruins and culture Anuradhapura beckons. It is one of the

greatest and oldest civilizations in the world spanning more than 1,300 years and 113 kings. See the 2200 year-old sacred Bodhi tree sapling extracted from the tree under which Lord Buddha attained enlightenment

Day 21 Anuradhapura to Colombo - 234kms

A great run to Colombo via Puttalam and the coast road. For the final few kilometres we take to new highway for the first time!

Arriving at Galle Face mid-afternoon, we have time for high tea – of course. In the evening we have the Gala dinner on the lawn of the Galle Face (weather willing).

Day 22 Colombo day off

Day off to explore Colombo

Day 23 Colombo

Depart

THE ITINERARY

DAY	TOWN	NOTES	KMS	HOTEL
Day 1	Colombo	Arrive	0	Galle Face
Day 2	Colombo	Sightseeing/collect cars	0	Galle Face
Day 3	Colombo to Galle	Temple/Village Life lunch/Moonstone mine	158	Galle Fort
Day 4	Galle day off	Tour of the fort area	0	Galle Fort
Day 5	Galle to Yala	Whales/Dondre	168	Jetwing Yala
Day 6	Yala day off	Yala Safari	0	Jetwing Yala
Day 7	Yala to Udawalawe	Udawalawe afternoon safari	98	The Grand Safari Resort
Day 8	Udawalawe to Haputale	Mountain drive	143	Akway Resort
Day 9	Haputale day off	Liptons Seat/Koslanda waterfall	92	Akway Resort
Day 10	Haputale to Nuwara Eliya	Devils Staircase/Horton Plains	70	Grand Hotel
Day 11	Nuwara Eliya day off	Lover's Leap and tea factory	25	Grand Hotel
Day 12	Nuwara Eliya to Kandy	Scenic route. Half day drive	98	Amaya Hills
Day 13	Kandy day off	Botanical Gardens/Temple of the Tooth	0	Amaya Hills
Day 14	Kandy to Sigiriya	Knuckles/Spice Garden/Dumballa Rock Temple	123	Heritage Kandama
Day 15	Sigiriya day off	Lion Rock	44	Heritage Kandama
Day 16	Trincomalee via Polonnaruwa	Polonnaruwa city ruins	187	Trinco Blu by Cinnamon
Day 17	Trincomalee day off	Free day	0	Trinco Blu by Cinnamon
Day 18	Jaffna	War graves en route	230	North Gate by Jetwing
Day 19	Jaffna to Anuradhapura	via Adams Bridge	304	Palm Garden Village,
Day 20	Anuradhapura day off	Visit sacred city/Wilpattu National Park	0	Palm Garden Village
Day 21	Anuradhapura to Colombo	Coastal run into Colombo	234	Galle Face,
Day 22	Colombo	Day off	0	Galle Face
Day 23	Depart			
			1,974	

INCLUDED IN THE RALLY

- The Ultimate Sri Lankan Adventure
- A 4x4 included with each entry
- Colonial style hotels where possible
- Airport Transfers
- Walking tour of old Colombo
- Breakfast and most evening meals
- Forts and ancient history
- Elephant Orphanage
- Game park safaris
- Tea plantations
- Devil's Staircase
- Horton Plains
- Incredible wildlife
- Stunning views
- Whale watching
- Waterfalls
- The Bespoke Rallies team
- And more...



We organise great rallies and tours around the world, sometimes with your own car and sometimes we are able to provide 4x4s. It all depends on what will give you the best experience. The events range from tours, often in far flung places such as Central America and Madagascar, to enduro events where getting to the end is the aim. We also run competitive events such as our four day rallies in the Pyrenees and Scotland to our month long Grand Prix of South America.



We are there for you. We always have mechanical back up and where necessary we provide medical assistance too. Our dedicated team of professionals, with vast experience of these demanding events, are always on hand to help you. We pride ourselves on great and cheerful service. We do our best to get every car to the end. When occasionally this is not possible we will help make all necessary arrangements for your vehicle and for you to accompany the event to the finish.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT BESPOKE RALLIES

We are friendly people who care about your rally. We have been organising rallies since 1999 and have pioneered events in South East Asia where we were the first to open up Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. We did the same in Bhutan and Cuba. Where we trailblaze others follow.

We are innovative and always look for the places you might never have thought of going, such as Madagascar. We innovate with technology to give you a better rally experience. We even find better ways to rally – such as using the Hurtigruten ships as your floating hotel on our Slartibartfast Rally and Imperial Rally.

WHAT OUR PARTICIPANTS SAY

'Well organised, good company, Good hotels and excellent Support. Driving during the day and on the Ferry at night all down the west coast of Norway was magical.'

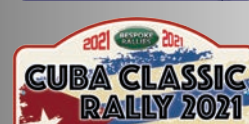
John and Fen Aird, The Slartibartfast 2017

'I would like to thank you and all your staff for the wonderful time we had. Sarah, Hernan, the two mechanics, the doctor and all the others were always very helpful and did a great job. We experienced demanding back roads, unbelievable landscapes, always good hotels (in some remote places the best available) and a perfect organization. In all an experience we would like to repeat.'

Arnold and Melanie Meier, The Grand Prix of South America 2018



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