

INTERNATIONAL · COMPLETE TRAVEL GUIDE

Sri Lanka

Temples, tea and turquoise coast — a short flight out, and for many Gujarati families a pilgrimage as much as a holiday.

BEST MONTHS	FROM AHMEDABAD	IDEAL DURATION	VEG & JAIN FOOD	GOOD FOR
December to March for the classic and hill-country route; avoid May–September on the west/south coast	Ahmedabad → Colombo, one-stop via Mumbai, Chennai or Bengaluru, about 5–6 h total	5–7 nights	Manageable — Indian veg restaurants in Colombo, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya; Jain meals arranged by hotels on request	Families, senior parents, Ramayana-trail groups, couples

Sri Lanka packs hill country, ancient rock forts, a colonial fort town and a warm coastline into an island small enough to cross in a week. For Gujarati families it has become one of the most requested international trips after Southeast Asia — the flight is short, the food is easier than most people expect, and a large part of the island is tied to the Ramayana, which makes the trip mean something extra for families who grew up on the story.

It is not a beach-only destination and we do not sell it as one. The real draw is the loop: Kandy's Temple of the Tooth, the tea gardens and cool air of Nuwara Eliya, the Nine Arch Bridge at Ella, the ancient cities of Sigiriya and Dambulla, and — for groups who want it — the sites associated with Sita, Hanuman and Ravana strung across the central hills. Add two or three nights at Bentota or Galle at the end and it is a complete, well-paced holiday.

What to see

Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, Kandy

Sri Lanka's most revered Buddhist shrine, housing a relic of the Buddha; evening puja around 6:30 pm draws the biggest crowds. Modest dress and bare feet are required inside.

Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage

Watch the herd bathe in the Maha Oya river, usually around 10 am and 2 pm — a highlight for children and grandparents alike.

Nuwara Eliya tea country

Rolling tea estates at 1,900 m, a working tea factory tour with tasting, and Gregory Lake for a boat ride or a cool-weather walk; this is also the closest Sri Lanka gets to Munnar in feel.

Nine Arch Bridge and Little Adam's Peak, Ella

A colonial-era railway bridge in a tea-estate valley, best seen with the 9:30 am or 4:30 pm train passing over it, and an easy 1.5-hour sunrise or sunset climb up Little Adam's Peak.

Galle Fort and turtle hatchery

A walkable Dutch-built fort town on the south coast with ramparts, a lighthouse and boutique cafes, plus a turtle hatchery near Bentota where hatchlings are released at sunset.

Seetha Amman Temple and the Ramayana trail

The temple at Seetha Eliya marks where Sita is believed to have been held captive; nearby Hakgala Gardens is identified with Ashok Vatika. A string of sites across the hill country and west coast trace the epic.

Sigiriya Rock Fortress and Dambulla Cave Temple

A 5th-century palace on top of a 200 m granite rock (1,200 steps, 3–4 hours) and a 2,000-year-old complex of five painted cave shrines nearby — the island's two most important ancient sites.

Yala National Park safari (optional)

The best odds anywhere in Asia of seeing a leopard in the wild, plus elephants and crocodiles; a full day out of Bentota or an overnight add-on, best on a 6 am or 3 pm jeep safari.

Getting there from Ahmedabad

Fly: there are no non-stop flights from Ahmedabad. The usual routing is Ahmedabad–Mumbai–Colombo or Ahmedabad–Chennai–Colombo or Ahmedabad–Bengaluru–Colombo, connecting on IndiGo, Air India or SriLankan Airlines, total travel time about 5–6 hours depending on the layover. Book the connection with at least 2 hours' gap.

Visa: Indian nationals need an ETA (Electronic Travel Authorisation) before travel — rules and fees have changed more than once in recent years, so check the current requirement close to your travel date rather than relying on last year's process; we handle the ETA application for every traveller as part of the package.

Forex: currency is the Sri Lankan Rupee (LKR); carry US dollars for exchange on arrival or use ATMs in Colombo, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya (widely available). Card payments are accepted in most hotels and larger restaurants; carry small LKR cash for temples, local shops and tips.

Getting around. A private van or car with an English-speaking driver-guide for the whole trip is the standard and the most practical option — it is how all three itineraries above are built. Sri Lanka also has a scenic hill-country train (Kandy–Ella is the famous stretch) which some groups add as an experience for one leg; ask us to combine it with the private vehicle for luggage transfer if you want the train for a single sector rather than the whole route.

When to go

SEASON	MONTHS	WHAT TO EXPECT
Best for classic route	December – March	Dry and pleasant on the west and south coast and in the hill country; 26–30°C in Colombo and Bentota, 15–20°C in Nuwara Eliya. The best window for the Classic and Ramayana Trail itineraries.

SEASON	MONTHS	WHAT TO EXPECT
South-west monsoon	May – September	Affects the west and south coast, including Colombo, Bentota and Galle — heavy rain and rough seas. Hill country (Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Ella) stays relatively drier and is a reasonable time to travel if the coast is dropped.
North-east monsoon	October – January	Affects the east coast (Trincomalee, Arugam Bay), which is not on our standard routes, so it has little effect on these itineraries. Some October showers can reach Kandy and the hills.
Inter-monsoon	April, October–November	Short, sharp afternoon showers possible island-wide, including April's Sinhala and Tamil New Year period when the island is also busiest with local travellers and prices rise.

Permits, rules and packing

No separate permits are needed for any of the sites on this route beyond the ETA visa. Temple of the Tooth and other Buddhist temples enforce a dress code: shoulders and knees must be covered (no shorts, sleeveless tops or short skirts), and shoes are removed before entering — carry socks if you prefer not to walk barefoot on stone floors. Photography is generally allowed in temple courtyards but restricted or requires a separate ticket inside some shrine rooms and at the Dambulla cave paintings; flash photography is not allowed near Buddha statues, and turning your back to a Buddha statue for a photograph is considered disrespectful.

What to pack

- Light cottons for Colombo, Bentota and Sigiriya (28–32°C)
- A light jacket or shawl for Nuwara Eliya evenings (12–15°C in winter)
- Modest clothing for temples — a stole or scarf solves the shoulders/knees rule quickly
- Comfortable walking shoes for Sigiriya's 1,200 steps and the Little Adam's Peak climb
- Socks for temples where shoes come off on stone or hot pavement
- Sunscreen, cap and mosquito repellent
- A small day bag for temple visits where large bags are not allowed inside

Veg and Jain food

- Colombo, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya each have Indian vegetarian restaurants used to Gujarati groups — we route dinners through these where the itinerary allows.
- Jain meals (no onion, garlic or root vegetables) can be arranged by most hotels on request; tell us at the time of booking so it is confirmed in writing with each property.
- Sri Lankan rice-and-curry, when ordered vegetarian, is a safe and good option almost everywhere — dhal, jackfruit curry, beetroot curry and coconut sambal are common and mild enough for most palates.

- Carry some familiar snacks (khakhra, theplas, dry namkeen) for the hill-country drives and the Sigiriya climb, where roadside options are limited.

What it costs

Indicative per-person costs on twin sharing for a 5–7 night trip in 2026, including one-stop flights from Ahmedabad, the ETA visa fee, hotels, private vehicle and breakfast/dinner. Actual quotes depend on travel dates, hotel category and group size.

VALUE

₹70,000 – 85,000

3★/4★ hotels, economy flights booked 8+ weeks ahead, shared group vehicle for larger groups

COMFORT

₹90,000 – 1,20,000

4★ hotels and a beach resort, private vehicle for a single family, flexible flight dates

PREMIUM

₹1,30,000 – 1,75,000

5★ hill-country and beach resorts, business-class option on the connecting sector, Yala safari and Galle Fort add-ons included

Where the money goes

- Flights are the largest single cost: an Ahmedabad–Colombo one-stop return runs roughly ₹28,000–40,000 booked early, higher in December and April.
- ETA visa fee applies per traveller and is charged on top of the airfare; we process it and include the current fee in your quote.
- Hotels: 3★/4★ ₹6,000–10,000 per room per night, 5★ hill-country and beach resorts ₹15,000–35,000.
- Yala National Park safari, where added: roughly ₹6,000–9,000 per jeep (shared by 4–5 people) for a half-day, plus park entry — best budgeted as a day trip from Bentota or as an overnight stay near the park.

Travelling with parents and children

- Sigiriya's 1,200 steps include some steep, narrow, open metal stairs near the top — not ideal for anyone with a knee or heart condition; the water gardens and museum at the base are a satisfying alternative and porter-assisted chairs can be arranged for a fee.
- Kandy's Temple of the Tooth gets very crowded around the 6:30 pm evening puja; visit in the late morning instead if the group has small children or seniors who prefer to avoid queues.
- The Kandy–Nuwara Eliya and Nuwara Eliya–Ella roads are winding hill roads; seat anyone prone to car sickness in front and carry Avomine.
- Temples require shoes off, sometimes on hot stone in the afternoon sun — carry socks for elders and children.
- Sri Lankan hotel rooms, like Indian ones, rarely include a fourth bed as standard; families of five should ask for a triple room or a connecting room at quote time.
- Carry passport photocopies and keep the ETA approval printed or saved offline — hotels and some sites ask to see it at check-in.

Questions families ask us

Is Sri Lanka safe for a family trip?

Yes. Sri Lanka is calm, welcoming and well set up for tourism; our groups have travelled there regularly without incident. As anywhere, keep valuables secure in crowded spots like Kandy town and Colombo's markets, and stick to your driver-guide's advice on areas to avoid after dark.

Is Gujarati or Jain food available?

Yes, though it needs more planning than in Kerala. Colombo, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya have Indian vegetarian restaurants used to groups from India, and hotels arrange Jain meals on request when told at booking. Rice-and-curry ordered vegetarian is a reliable fallback everywhere else, and we recommend carrying some snacks for the hill drives.

How authentic is the Ramayana trail — are these historically confirmed sites?

The sites are based on long-standing local tradition and oral history linking places in Sri Lanka to the Ramayana, not on archaeological proof, and Sri Lankan and Indian scholarship differ on some of them. We present them as they are shown locally — as tradition and pilgrimage, not as verified history — and most Gujarati families who take this itinerary find the experience meaningful regardless.

Which month is best?

December to March gives the most reliable weather across the whole loop — hills, Colombo and the south-west coast. April brings the Sinhala/Tamil New Year, which is festive but crowded and pricier. Avoid May–September if the trip includes Bentota or Galle, since the south-west monsoon affects that coast directly.

What currency should we carry, and is UPI or card accepted?

The Sri Lankan Rupee (LKR). Carry US dollars to exchange on arrival, or use ATMs, which are widely available in Colombo, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya. Cards are accepted at most hotels and larger restaurants; small shops, temples and tips need LKR cash. UPI acceptance is limited outside a few Colombo outlets, so do not rely on it.

Is this trip manageable with young children?

Yes, especially the Relaxed 7-night itinerary, which has fewer hotel changes and shorter drives. Pinnawala's elephant bathing, the Kandy cultural show, the Nine Arch Bridge train-watching and two beach nights at the end all work well for children; the main thing to plan around is the Sigiriya climb, which is long for small children and can be shortened to the base area.

Classic Sri Lanka

The standard first-time loop: culture and hills for three nights, then two nights on the coast before flying home. No drive longer than four hours.

5 nights / 6 days Route: **Colombo – Kandy – Nuwara Eliya – Bentota – Colombo**

From **₹78,000** per person, indicative

Day

1

COLOMBO → KANDY

Arrive and head to the hills

Land at Bandaranaike International Airport (CMB), Colombo, by late morning after the connecting flight. Your driver-guide meets you and you drive straight to Kandy (115 km, about 3.5 hours) with a stop at Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage on the way for the midday bathing session. Check in by evening and rest.

Stay: **Kandy** · Meals: **Dinner**

Day

2

KANDY

Temple of the Tooth and cultural show

Morning visit to the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic (shoulders and knees covered, shoes off); the Royal Botanical Garden at Peradeniya in the afternoon for its avenue of giant bamboo and orchid house. Evening Kandyan cultural dance show at 5 pm followed by the temple's evening puja if timings allow.

Stay: **Kandy** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day

3

KANDY → NUWARA ELIYA

Into tea country

Leave after breakfast for Nuwara Eliya (80 km, about 3 hours on a winding hill road), stopping at a working tea factory for a tour and tasting. Afternoon at Gregory Lake for a boat ride or a walk; the town itself, with its colonial-era post office and cottages, feels distinctly cooler and greener than the plains.

Stay: **Nuwara Eliya** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day

4

NUWARA ELIYA → BENTOTA

Down to the coast

Descend from the hills to Bentota (150 km, about 5 hours, the longest drive of the trip) through tea estates and waterfalls. Check into a beach resort by late afternoon; an early-evening visit to the Kosgoda turtle hatchery nearby for the release of hatchlings is a good stop en route if timing allows.

Stay: **Bentota** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
5

BENTOTA

Beach and Galle Fort

A relaxed morning at the resort — pool or beach — followed by a half-day trip to Galle Fort (30 km, 45 minutes): the ramparts, the lighthouse, the old Dutch church and the boutique streets inside the fort walls. Return to Bentota for a last evening by the sea.

Stay: **Bentota** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
6

BENTOTA → COLOMBO → AHMEDABAD

Fly home

Drive to Colombo airport (140 km, about 2.5 hours); a short city stop in Colombo (Gangaramaya Temple or Galle Face Green) is possible if your flight is in the evening. Fly out via your connecting city back to Ahmedabad.

Stay: — · Meals: **Breakfast**

Included

- + Return Ahmedabad–Colombo flights (one-stop)
- + ETA visa processing
- + 5 nights in inspected 3★/4★ hotels
- + Private AC vehicle with English/Hindi-speaking driver-guide for the whole trip
- + Daily breakfast and veg dinner
- + Pinnawala entry, temple and cultural show tickets

Not included

- Lunches on sightseeing days
- Yala safari and turtle hatchery entry fee
- Travel insurance
- Sri Lanka departure and airport taxes not already in the airfare

STANDARD

₹78,000–92,000

Per person, twin sharing

PREMIUM

**₹1,10,000–
1,40,000**

Per person, twin sharing

Per person on twin sharing, indicative for 2026, including flights from Ahmedabad, visa fee, hotels and the private vehicle. December and April (Sinhala New Year) run 20–30% higher.

Ramayana Trail

The itinerary our Gujarati groups ask for most: temples and sites across Sri Lanka identified with Sita, Hanuman and Ravana, woven into the same hill-country and coastal route so nothing feels like a detour.

6 nights / 7 days

Route: **Colombo – Kelaniya – Kandy – Nuwara Eliya (Ashok Vatika) – Ella (Ravana Falls) – Bentota (Munneswaram) – Colombo**

From **₹92,000** per person, indicative

Day

1

COLOMBO → KELANIYA → KANDY

Arrive and the first temple

Land in Colombo and drive out towards Kandy, stopping first at Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara (10 km from the airport road), one of Sri Lanka's most sacred Buddhist sites and, in local tradition, a place Ravana is said to have worshipped. Continue to Kandy (115 km total, about 3.5 hours from Colombo) with a stop at Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage. Check in by evening.

Stay: **Kandy** · Meals: **Dinner**

Day

2

KANDY

Temple of the Tooth and cultural show

Morning at the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic (dress code enforced: shoulders and knees covered, shoes removed at the entrance). Afternoon at Peradeniya Botanical Garden. Evening Kandyan cultural dance show, followed by the temple's evening puja around 6:30 pm for those who want to see it.

Stay: **Kandy** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day

3

KANDY → NUWARA ELIYA

Ashok Vatika

Drive to Nuwara Eliya (80 km, 3 hours) via a tea factory tour. The main stop of the day is the Seetha Amman Temple at Seetha Eliya, built where Sita is believed to have been held during her captivity — note the yellow-flecked riverbed stones locals point to as Hanuman's footprints. Continue to Hakgala Botanical Gardens, identified by tradition with Ashok Vatika, Ravana's pleasure garden.

Stay: **Nuwara Eliya** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
4

NUWARA ELIYA → ELLA

Ravana country

Drive to Ella (75 km, about 3 hours) through tea country. En route or on arrival, stop at Ravana Falls, a wide cascade said to be where Ravana hid Sita, and Ravana Cave, a rock cavern in the hills above associated with the same legend. Afternoon walk up Little Adam's Peak (1.5 hours return) for the view over the valley.

Stay: **Ella** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
5

ELLA → BENTOTA

Nine Arch Bridge and down to the coast

Early morning at the Nine Arch Bridge to catch the 9:30 am train crossing, then descend to Bentota (200 km, about 5.5 hours) via Ratnapura. Break the journey with a stop at Munneswaram Temple near Chilaw if time allows on this leg, or reschedule it for day 6 depending on timing — our driver-guide will advise on the day.

Stay: **Bentota** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
6

BENTOTA

Munneswaram and the coast

Visit Munneswaram Temple, an ancient Shiva temple near Chilaw where, in local tradition, Rama is said to have prayed to atone for killing Ravana. Return to Bentota for beach time, the Kosgoda turtle hatchery release at sunset, and a last evening by the sea. Galle Fort is a possible half-day add-on if the group prefers it to a full beach day.

Stay: **Bentota** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
7

BENTOTA → COLOMBO → AHMEDABAD

Fly home

Drive to Colombo airport (140 km, about 2.5 hours). If time permits before an evening flight, a stop at Gangaramaya Temple in Colombo. Fly out via your connecting city to Ahmedabad.

Stay: — · Meals: **Breakfast**

Included

- + Return Ahmedabad–Colombo flights (one-stop)
- + ETA visa processing
- + 6 nights in inspected 3★/4★ hotels
- + Private AC vehicle with driver-guide familiar with the Ramayana-trail route
- + Daily breakfast and veg dinner
- + All temple and site entries named in the itinerary

Not included

- Lunches on sightseeing days
- Cultural show and Nine Arch Bridge train-viewing are free to view but the Kandy show ticket is extra
- Travel insurance
- GST and any local puja/donation costs at temples

STANDARD

₹92,000–1,10,000

Per person, twin sharing

PREMIUM

**₹1,30,000–
1,60,000**

Per person, twin sharing

Per person on twin sharing, indicative for 2026, including flights, visa, hotels and vehicle. Popular with groups of 15–30 travelling together around Diwali and the winter school-holiday window; book 8–10 weeks ahead for those dates.

Relaxed Sri Lanka

Built for families with senior parents or small children: fewer hotel changes, shorter driving days, the ancient cities added in, and two full beach nights at the end instead of one.

7 nights / 8 days Route: **Colombo – Sigiriya/Dambulla – Kandy – Nuwara Eliya – Bentota – Colombo**

From **₹1,00,000** per person, indicative

Day

1

COLOMBO → SIGIRIYA

Arrive and head to the ancient cities

Land in Colombo late morning and drive directly to the Sigiriya/Dambulla area (170 km, about 4 hours with a lunch stop). This is the longest single drive of the trip and is placed on day 1 deliberately, before anyone is tired. Check in and rest for the evening.

Stay: **Sigiriya** · Meals: **Dinner**

Day

2

SIGIRIYA

Rock fortress and cave temple

An unhurried morning climbing Sigiriya Rock (1,200 steps; those who prefer not to climb can enjoy the water gardens and museum at the base, and porter-assisted chairs are available for a fee). Afternoon at Dambulla Cave Temple, a short 20-minute drive away, with its five caves of Buddha statues and ceiling paintings.

Stay: **Sigiriya** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day

3

SIGIRIYA → KANDY

Onward to Kandy

Drive to Kandy (90 km, about 2.5 hours), stopping at Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage for the midday bathing session on the way. Afternoon free to settle in; evening Kandyan cultural dance show at 5 pm.

Stay: **Kandy** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day

4

KANDY

Temple of the Tooth

A gentle day: Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic in the morning (dress code enforced), a short walk by Kandy Lake, and the Peradeniya Botanical Garden in the afternoon. No long drives today.

Stay: **Kandy** · Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

Day
5

KANDY → NUWARA ELIYA

Tea country

Short drive to Nuwara Eliya (80 km, 3 hours) via a tea factory tour and tasting. Afternoon at Gregory Lake — a boat ride for those who want it, or simply a walk in the cool air. Those interested in the Ramayana trail can add the nearby Seetha Amman Temple as an optional stop.

Stay: Nuwara Eliya · Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day
6

NUWARA ELIYA → BENTOTA

Down to the beach

Descend to Bentota (150 km, about 5 hours) and check into a beach resort by late afternoon. No sightseeing planned for the rest of the day — settle in, pool or beach, an early night.

Stay: Bentota · Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day
7

BENTOTA

Beach day and turtle hatchery

A full free day at the resort. Optional half-day trip to Galle Fort (30 km, 45 minutes) for those who want it, or the Kosgoda turtle hatchery in the late afternoon for the hatchling release at sunset — both are easy to skip for a pure rest day.

Stay: Bentota · Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day
8

BENTOTA → COLOMBO → AHMEDABAD

Fly home

Drive to Colombo airport (140 km, about 2.5 hours); leave with enough buffer for an elderly-friendly pace through check-in. Fly out via your connecting city to Ahmedabad.

Stay: — · Meals: Breakfast

Included

- + Return Ahmedabad–Colombo flights (one-stop)
- + ETA visa processing
- + 7 nights in inspected 4★ hotels and a beach resort
- + Private AC vehicle with driver-guide throughout, paced for seniors and children
- + Daily breakfast and veg dinner
- + Sigiriya, Dambulla, Pinnawala and temple entries

Not included

- Lunches on sightseeing days
- Yala safari and Galle Fort guide (optional add-ons)
- Travel insurance
- GST and porter-chair charges at Sigiriya if used

STANDARD

**₹1,00,000–
1,18,000**

Per person, twin sharing

PREMIUM

**₹1,40,000–
1,75,000**

Per person, twin sharing

Per person on twin sharing, indicative for 2026, including flights, visa, hotels and vehicle. The extra beach night and slower pace add roughly ₹10,000–15,000 over the classic itinerary.

Want this booked properly?

Send this PDF to us on WhatsApp with your dates and the number of travellers. Hotel names and a firm price within 24 hours.

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