

Sri Lanka group tour, 19/1 - 3/2 2018 with Evergreenlanka



Dear all,

For those of you who are not so familiar with me, I'm Daniel Jarvid. I'm based in Gothenburg and most of my time I spend working in my clinic in Aschebergsgatan 46. In my clinic I give osteopathic treatment, teach YogaMonks Sadhana courses and also give personal training in both YogaMonks and rehabilitation exercises. Apart from that I also work as a travel agent specializing in Sri Lanka, under the business name Evergreenlanka.

Every year I arrange a group trip to Sri Lanka. For the past two years Sri Lanka has been developing in an extreme pace with a lot of new hotels popping up. A lot of them are huge hotel complexes with kid's clubs and 3-5 different restaurants. Since my aim always is to show my groups the calm and more peaceful places, there are no such hotels in my itinerary. When we visit the UNESCO-listed world heritage sites there will of course be other tourists there, but in these cases it is worth it I find.

This quite adventurous tour starts on the 19th of January, which means that you will have to leave Europe on the 18th. I'll happily help you with recommendations and/or bookings of hotels, transfers, chauffeur-guides (you name it!) in case you'd like to arrive earlier. I book via the local DMC:s which is cheaper than booking via let's say booking.com or other booking sites that add their commission on the price.

Please google all the underlined and **boldfaced** names mentioned in the itinerary below for more information. Also click on the links to see photos of each hotel.

The itinerary

As mentioned above you will have to fly in/arrive in Colombo airport (CMB) on the 19th of January at the latest to join the tour. 19th to 20th is a well needed recovery night after the long flight and will be spent in the hotel **Pegasus Reef**

(<http://www.pegasusreefhotel.com/gallery.html>) only 200 meters from the **Helakanda beach** in **Wattale**. There is also a nice pool here. (This night is the first night included in the tour package price).



Pegasus Reef Hotel

After an early breakfast we will leave this hotel and head towards **Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage**. Unfortunately this has become a huge tourist trap, and therefore we will not enter the actual orphanage. However, we do not want to miss when the herd of female and baby elephants is taken down to the river for their daily bath. That elephants love water is no understatement! For me it's like watching pure happiness in its essence, I never get tired of it. By doing this we support this very important organization that saves elephants all over the island that have been in captivity and mistreated, and they have been doing so since the 70s.



Bathing time in the river at Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage

The photo above is taken from one of the restaurants in which we will have some lunch in before we leave.

After this heartwarming experience we are setting course towards the UNESCO listed world heritage site, **Dambulla Golden Cave Temple**. There are some things one should not miss when having traveled all the way to Sri Lanka, and this is one of them. This temple, with its amazing wall paintings and statues, is the largest and best-preserved cave temple complex on the island.



The Golden Cave Temple of Dambulla

We will arrive to our hotel in **Dambulla, Sigiriya Village** (<https://www.agoda.com/sigiriya-village/hotel/sigiriya-lk.html>) in the evening and we will spend two lovely days and three nights here (20th to 23rd). During our two full days here you will have the opportunity to climb the also UNESCO listed, **Sigiriya Rock Fortress**, as well as going on an elephant jeep safari in **Minneria National Park**.



Sigiriya Rock Fortress with its stunning view from the top

As you can see in the photo above, the view from the top of this rock is absolutely breathtaking, so remember your camera for this one!



Hotel Sigiriya Village, from where you can actually see Sigiriya Rock

All the elephants in the national parks are wild and happy, just as they should be. This makes them quite dangerous, but luckily they are quite used to the jeeps. Each of these two activities do not take more than approximately 3,5 hours, so you will have plenty of time to relax and opportunity to sleep in.



Jeep safari in Minneria national park

The **23rd** is filled with exciting activities. Early morning we're setting course towards the heart of the island and the tropical highlands where **Kandy city** is situated. On the way here we will make a stop at a **Spice Garden** where we will get a guided tour and get to see, touch and taste a great number of spices and herbs.



Spice Garden

Directly upon arrival in Kandy we will have lunch. Here we also have the possibility to change clothes before we visit the world famous and main reason for this city being an UNESCO listed world heritage site, ***the Temple of the tooth relic***. We all need to cover our shoulders and knees and preferably wear white clothes when we enter the temple. Later in the afternoon/evening we will see a ***Kandian cultural dance show***. I tell you, you'll be surprised to see what some big bellied middle aged Sri Lankan men can pull off acrobatically!! The live drums are quite loud, so sensitive ears and those of you with tinnitus should definitely bring ear plugs for this one.



The Temple of the Tooth Relic and the man made lake in Kandy city

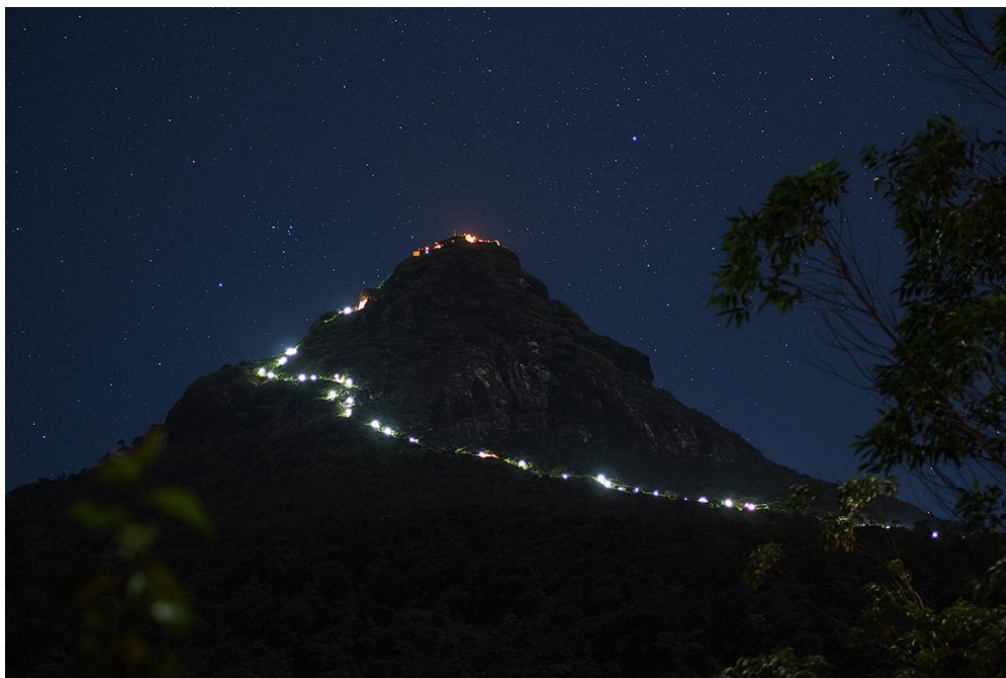


Cultural dance show in Kandy

After a long and eventful day we will arrive in our city hotel **Kandy Ozo** (<https://www.agoda.com/ozo-kandy-hotel/hotel/kandy-lk.html?checkin=2017-05-05&los=1&adults=2&rooms=1&cid=1646624&tag=f505b1b5-0156-dff1-8fbf-8459df8cab4c&searchrequestid=7ce596f6-8698-4fed-9563-694bd81cef16>) We will be staying two nights here (23rd to 25th) This is quite a new hotel with a nice pool terrace. On the 24th we all need a bit of a sleep in and some time to just relax and perhaps enjoy the pool and the view. Early afternoon you will really get to experience the quite extraordinary tropical highland full on. We are going trekking in **Hunasgiriya**. For this you need to put on proper walking shoes, as in no flip flops or sandals. Also I recommend you to put on your swim suit underneath because if the weather allows we will have the opportunity to freshen up in the **Hunas water falls** with its natural pools. I'm particularly excited about this because I have not yet experienced it myself.

Before we leave Kandy on the 25th we will make a stop at the quite famous Kandy market to have a look around. I always buy scarfs myself and give away to friends at home. Of course you will have to bargain to get a good price, which is practically always the case in Asian markets. Before we let our driver take us a bit further south we will probably also have lunch in Kandy. For some of you it will be a good idea to get some sleep during the 3-4 hour journey to our next destination, since this is where you will have the opportunity take the level of adventure up a notch to say the least!

For those of you who are up for it, we will climb **Adam's Peak**. We start our climb during night and hopefully all of us will make it all the way to the top. After having watched the sunrise from there, we will start our walk down the same way we came up. Climbing this mountain has been a pilgrimage for Buddhist, Hindus, Muslims and Christians for over a thousand years. The peak stretches above the clouds and 2243 meters above sea level. Before we start this climb we will leave our luggage, have dinner and hopefully get some quality rest in **Wathsala Inn (25th to 26th)** (<https://www.agoda.com/wathsala-inn/hotel/nuwara-eliya-lk.html>)



Adam's Peak by night



Wathsala inn with Adam's Peak in the background

This is a TOUGH climb with high steps, especially as we get closer to the top. Some of you might not be able to do this because of knee and hip problems or other health issues. For those of you who cannot do this or simply do not want to, will at least get to enjoy the beautiful view of this magnificent mountain top and the clear tropical highland air from the hotel.

After breakfast in Wathsala inn we will continue our journey even further south to **Ratnapura**, "the city of gems". Here we will stay in one of my favorite inland hotels, **Lake Serenity** (<https://www.agoda.com/lake-serenity-boutique-hotel/hotel/rathnapura-lk.html?checkin=2017-05-05&los=1&adults=2&rooms=1&cid=1646624&tag=68f43028-fe8a-0bfb-ca7e-a684b815f382&searchrequestid=f515998d-563a-41b3-9033-5045d2776c97>) which is a gorgeous Eco boutique hotel. Only a few minutes walking from this hotel there is a gem mine that we have been able to visit and hopefully it is still active. The work conditions for these young mine workers are absolutely awful (I know because I climbed down there with them) and it is also very dangerous. A good experience to keep in mind when we feel that things are tough here in Sweden. It really puts things in perspective...



Lake Serenity



Lake Serenity pool area in the early morning

During our two full days and three nights here (26th to 29th) I will hopefully get to show you another favorite spot of mine, ***Bopath falls*** (depending on weather and water conditions). For those of you who are interested to learn a bit about gemstones, how they develop and then how they are cut, we will also visit a gem shop/jeweler in Ratnapura.



Bopath falls

By now I'm sure you all feel it is high time for some beach life and the Indian Ocean, and I couldn't agree more! Up on a beautiful mountain hill, with a fantastic view of the ocean and with only a 10 minute nature walk down to the stunning beach, we will spend our last 5 night of this round tour (**29th** to **3rd**). This quite small and gorgeous facility, **Palace Mirissa** (https://www.booking.com/hotel/lk/palace-mirissa.en-gb.html?aid=311984;label=palace-mirissa-PznAuPRFQBI6ThuOTPCjowS162172691984%3Apl%3Aata%3Ap1%3Ap2%3Aac%3Aap1t1%3Aneg%3Afi%3Atiaud-285284109806%3Akwd-13694725073%3Alp1012511%3Ali%3Adet%3Adm;sid=560505f736dce184cca70d6c40965c7f;ucfs=1;room1=A,A;dest_type=city;dest_id=-2228935;srfid=d709e8624a5005aa2a30d2f861c17cf31c0661f2X1), has only private bungalows which we of course will be staying in and also a very nice pool.

Other hotel restaurants and bars with music are only 10-20 minutes walk away from our hotel. This means we are never really disturbed by the noise from them or occasional beach party, if the pastoral tranquility is what you are after. The owner of this hotel also owns the closest hotel down on the beach, so usually we are able to use that hotel's sunbeds for free as well as the restrooms.



The beach below our hotel Palace Mirissa



The view from Palace Mirissa

During our stay here you will have the opportunity to go on a blue whale safari, very often we get to see Dolphins and sometimes turtles as well. We will also visit a turtle hatchery where they keep the turtles until they are 3 days old, before they get to struggle their way into the Indian Ocean. By doing this the numbers of survivors up to adulthood increases massively and saves certain species from extinction.

After 5 nights in this incredible place, this grand tour of Sri Lanka has come to its end for this time.

Some of you might need to go back home a bit earlier because of work etc, and there will be no problem for me to arrange a transfer back to Colombo airport for you from the 29th of January. The transfer back to the airport is not included for anyone since we might have very different departure times and dates even. **However, if you need to leave earlier than the 3rd of February, even if you notify this in beforehand, there will be no financial refund. You will only get a refund if you leave for reasons that are covered by your own insurances.**

During the trip, when there is time, opportunity and enough interested I will most probably teach yoga/meditation/spinal movement. This is a bonus for those of you who are interested. I do not want to force yoga classes into the itinerary, nor do I want anyone to be disappointed in case it turns out we cannot do so many classes. Of course it also depends on my own level of energy whether I can teach or not.

For those of you who are interested in more of a yoga and meditation retreat to Sri Lanka, my dear friend and YogaMonks teacher Mithila Ubayasekara will have one the week before my round trip starts. For more info about Mithila, YogaMonks and the 7 day retreat she is having the week before my round trip starts, please click on the links below:

<http://yogamonks.se/?page=about-lotus-lectures>

<http://yogamonks.se/index.php?pageId=666>

<http://yogamonks.se/index.php?special=article&id=157>

Since Mithila's retreat is not a round trip it will be perfect to combine these two, if you have the opportunity!

Prices for the round trip per person (flight tickets NOT included):

Double/twin room: 2 300 USD (cirka 20 250 SEK beroende på växelkursen när ni betalar)

Single room: 2 780 USD (cirka 24 500 SEK beroende på växelkursen när ni betalar)

I have reserved 10 rooms in each hotel and I need a minimum of 8 travelers excluding myself to be able go through with this adventure. If less than 8 have registered by the end of October, I will cancel. This means that you CANNOT buy your flight tickets until enough people have signed up! As soon as 8 of you have registered I will notify you immediately, so we can all buy tickets as soon as possible. Also you will have to be able to pay for the round trip in October at the latest. As soon as enough people have is registered Pledge Holidays, my local travel partner that has done all the bookings to local prices, will invoice each and everyone. Of course you will receive both booking confirmation and receipt from Pledge Holidays.

If you reserve a single room, I can easily make it a double room at any time if you would find someone you want travel and share rooms with. If the single room is already payed for, the additional person simply buys a flight ticket and pay the balance between the single room price and the double room price. You can sort out amongst yourselves so you both have payed 50/50 in the end.

We can also arrange rooms for three people. Then it will be one double bed and one smaller bed in the same room (an adult fits into it of course). Let me know if you are interested in this alternative and I will get back to you with the price. Of course it will be cheaper per person than the double/twin room.

If you would want to reduce the number of travelers after already having paid, you will need a travel insurance that covers this to get your money back.

IT IS EVERY INDIVIDUAL TRAVELER'S OWN RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE ALL NECESSARY TRAVEL INSURANCES NEEDED TO GET MONEY BACK IN CASE HE/SHE FOR SOME REASON CANNOT MAKE THE TRAVEL AFTER HAVING ALREADY PAID FOR THE FLIGHT TICKET AND ROUND TRIP IN SRI LANKA. THIS IS ALSO THE CASE IF YOU WOULD GET SICK WHILE BEING IN SRI LANKA AND MIGHT BE IN NEED OF EXPENSIVE MEDICAL CARE ETC.

The price includes:

- Half board with fantastic buffets, offering a huge selection of both local and more European dishes at both breakfast and dinner. On these you will always find many vegetarian alternatives, dessert table and of course the wonderful exotic fruit selection. Only the local dishes are really spicy. **If you have any food allergies you must always ask the chefs what you can eat and not. I will of course help you with this, but unfortunately I can't guarantee that the kitchen staff will get it right even if we are being very clear.**
- All the activities mentioned in the itinerary which includes road taxes, entrance fees, boat ride tickets, jeep safari with local drivers from the national park and all the traveling between hotels and activities.
- All the traveling we do will be done in a comfortable vehicle with AC driven by our own driver. We will also have our own local guide and one extra staff that will make sure that our vehicle is never left unattended with all our belongings.
- My personal assistance if there are any problems or inconveniences.
- If you would book only the hotels with breakfast included and **nothing else** mentioned above on www.booking.com, you would pay a bit more than 1700 USD (drygt 15000 SEK) for a double/twin room per person. This means that you are getting everything else for around 590 USD (drygt 5000 SEK) on this tour. Please feel free to check online yourself. Some hotels are fully booked since I have reserved rooms, but choose dates that are available so you get a rough idea of the price, if you want to make sure I'm not exaggerating.

Additional costs:

- FLIGHT TICKET
- Daily lunch cost, approximately 50-120 SEK depending on what you choose. If you prefer the national dish, Sri Lankan rice and curry, you will definitely be more than full each day and I'm quite sure you will pay less than 50 SEK in most places
- Since you all will have different arrival and departure times, the transfer from and to the airport is not included. I will do my best to gather as many of you as possible in the same vehicle though. A driver will be waiting for you in the arrival hall with your name on a sign.
- Tip to our local tour guide, driver and hotel staff. You should calculate approximately 50 SEK per day in total.
- A tourist visa bought online (www.eta.gov.lk). It's usually a lot more expensive to buy the visa in the Colombo airport on arrival and it usually takes FOREVER, SO MAKE SURE YOU PURCHASE IT ONLINE BEFORE YOU ARRIVE. Also remember to print the e-mail they send when they have granted your application and bring it with you, just to be on the safe side. The price for the visa is 30 USD, if you buy it online. Please note that your passport needs to be valid for more than six months after departure date from Sri Lanka.

Flight tickets

PLEASE DO NOT buy flight tickets before I have confirmed that enough people have registered. For those of you who can easily fly from Stockholm, I recommend you to do so. You'll find both cheaper and shorter flights in general and also with the nicer airlines from Stockholm. Remember that you'll have to arrive on the 19th of January at the latest.

You have now reached the end of this presentation. Whether you can/want to come or not, I hope you have had a joyful read. In case you would want to do a similar trip with a private group/family, I will happily help you to arrange and organize this as well. My contacts are:

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Please do not hesitate to contact me in case you have any questions. To register for this trip, please contact me on the e-mail above. Please name your e-mail (subject) REGISTRATION SL GROUP 2018. I will then get back to and ask for all the details and information I need.



I HOPE YOU CAN COME!

/Daniel

