

## SRI LANKA TEA, SAFARI & SCENIC TOUR



**December 2018 / January 2019**

**Summary – 15-day tour of Sri Lanka covering the tea trade, tea industry, tea gardens, beach resorts, cultural sites, temples, safari, shopping and afternoon tea. Accompanied by Lalith Guy Paranavitana President Empire Tea Services USA (since 1990) and former Tea Estate Manager and Director of the Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation, Sri Lanka (1970 – 1989).**

View videos on Sri Lanka –

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1\\_fIHp4NG1g&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_fIHp4NG1g&feature=youtu.be)

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/YH8Tq5QNvFs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqSmq8RndrY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vdssKAWax8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpZI2oGPtio>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziK-0s\\_XnO4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziK-0s_XnO4)

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/exM8zm3ggTk> - Aerial views from a drone.

Watch a clip from a previous tea tour.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCYwcF12tdY>

Video from our facebook page:

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/empireteaservices/videos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/empireteaservices/videos/?ref=page_internal)

<https://www.facebook.com/empireteaservices/videos/346904648679151/>

Beautiful Pictures of Sri Lanka

<http://journalistontherun.com/2017/08/23/places-to-visit-in-sri-lanka/>

## **ITINERARY (These are tentative dates)**

- Jan 4 Arrive at Colombo airport early morning to be met by a representative of the tour operator, who will also be the English-speaking guide for the entire tour. Immediate transfer to Kingsbury hotel, Colombo. <https://www.thekingsburyhotel.com> situated in the business district of Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, and overlooking the Indian ocean on the west coast. Early afternoon enjoy a sumptuous High Tea at the hotel. Relax in the hotel, Swim in the pool, take a walk along the beach. Dinner and night at the Kingsbury hotel.
- Jan 5 After an early breakfast leave for the Colombo Tea Auctions held at the Chamber of Commerce, accompanied by a senior tea broker from John Keells Ltd. [http://www.ceylonblacktea.com/colombo\\_tea\\_auction.php](http://www.ceylonblacktea.com/colombo_tea_auction.php) Dress code – smart casual (no sandals, slippers, T shirts or polos). Snack lunch. Afternoon – Tea tasting conducted by a senior tea taster of John Keells Ltd at their Corporate office (Tea Department). Late afternoon – return to hotel. Dinner and Night at the Kingsbury Hotel. After dinner explore the roof top sky lounge and get a bird's eye view of Colombo by night (optional). <https://www.thekingsburyhotel.com/dining/sky-lounge.html>
- Jan 6 Leave very early for Galle district (Breakfast snack) to visit Lumbini tea estate, a low elevation tea estate producing orthodox teas. Lunch hosted by the Owner of Lumbini Estate. Afternoon – visit the factory and learn about tea manufacture. Return to the Kingsbury hotel for dinner and night.
- Jan 7 After an early breakfast leave for the elephant orphanage at Pinnawala to see river bathing and bottle feeding of baby elephants. Lunch at Pinnawala. [http://www.elephant.se/location2.php?location\\_id=43](http://www.elephant.se/location2.php?location_id=43) Proceed to Habarana. Dinner and overnight accommodation at the Chaaya Habarana hotel, a pristine location overlooking a lake. <http://www.cinnamonhotels.com/en/habaranavillagebycinnamon/>
- Jan 8 Early risers can watch rare species of birds and other fauna and flora close to the lake. After breakfast proceed to Sigiriya and climb the rock fortress. <http://sigiriya.org/gallery.htm> A former fortress built on top of a gigantic rock. Climb to the top to see some of the earliest known Frescoes etched into the rock 2000 years ago, and enjoy a panoramic view. Return to the hotel for Lunch and spend the rest of the afternoon relaxing or having a swim. Dinner and night at Chaaya Habarana hotel.
- Jan 9 After breakfast leave for Kandy city, the last bastion of the British colonial era. [http://www.galenfrysinger.com/tooth\\_temple.htm](http://www.galenfrysinger.com/tooth_temple.htm) Lunch at the

Queens Hotel. Afternoon - see the sights of Kandy (2500 feet above sea level) and the beautiful lake and then leave for Nuwara Eliya (4800 feet above sea level) which is also called little England. On the way traverse the beautiful hill country and see the magnificent mountains, waterfalls, breathtaking vistas and the endless carpets of lush green tea gardens. View Nuwara Eliya estate (Inverness), the former estate managed by Lalith Guy Paranavitana. Arrive at the Hill Club around 6 pm. Dinner and night at the Hill Club. <http://hillclubsrilanka.lk>

- Jan 10 7 am visit Pedro Estate <https://www.kvpl.com/lovers-leap-pedro> This factory also sells under another famous name called 'Lovers Leap'. Tea tasting at Pedro Factory will include not only teas produced at the factory, but also teas produced in the neighboring factories in the Nuwara Eliya region. 11 am **Brunch** at the superintendent's residence. After brunch visit tea fields and see tea plucking etc. Late afternoon, return to the Hill Club for relaxation. Dinner and overnight stay at the Hill Club.
- Jan 11 7 am leave for Waltrim estate (snack breakfast). Visit tea fields and factory <http://www.historyofceylontea.com/tea-estates/estates-registry/waltrim--2139.html> Lunch with the superintendent at his residence. After lunch, visit the Tea Research Institute in Talawakelle, <http://www.tri.lk> for an afternoon of scientific insights into tea cultivation and technology. You will meet the scientists who contribute to the improvement of the industry with new innovations. Return to the Hill Club for dinner and overnight stay.
- Jan 12 After breakfast leave for Yala via Ella, descending 4000 feet along the Ella/Wellawaya road, a very scenic and picturesque route. See the Ravana water fall cascading down from 300 feet. Lunch at the Ella Hotel. 5 pm arrive at the Cinnamon Wild Hotel situated on the south eastern coast. Dinner and overnight at the Cinnamon Wild Hotel. <http://www.cinnamonhotels.com/CinnamonWildYala.htm>
- Jan 13 Morning breakfast and relaxation. The sea is just a short walk from the hotel. Lunch at the hotel. Afternoon Jeep Safari to the Yala National Park <http://www.pbase.com/dbehrens/yala> to see wild life in their natural habitat This wild life sanctuary is home to elephants, bears, leopards, deer, wild buffalo, crocodiles, peacocks, wild boar and a fascinating array of indigenous and migratory birds. Bring your camera and or camcorder! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0rcCmlqSwU> The terrain is varied flat plains alternating with rocky outcrops. The vegetation ranges from open plains to dense jungle. Water holes, small lakes and lagoons are in abundance giving refuge to magnificent fauna and flora. The sanctuary stretches to the sea as its eastern border. An experience of a lifetime! Dinner and overnight at the Cinnamon Wild Hotel.

- Jan 14 Rest day at the hotel. Stroll along the beach (swimming in the sea is not recommended due to strong currents) or pool and relax in a hammock with a book. This place is truly laid back for relaxation. If anyone wishes to go on another safari drive in the afternoon, it can be arranged.
- Jan 15 After a very early breakfast, leave for Coco Bay Hotel, Unawatuna. <https://www.cocobayunawatuna.com> for lunch. Afterward visit Galle town and see the old Dutch fort and the ramparts. Walk the cobble stone paths and shop in the boutiques. Enjoy quaint restaurants serving coffee, tea and other delicacies. Late afternoon, proceed to Mt. Lavinia hotel, south of Colombo. <http://www.mountlaviniahotel.com> Mt. Lavinia Hotel is situated on the famous Mt. Lavinia beach on the outskirts of Colombo city. The private beach is delightful. Dinner on the terrace (magnifique!) overlooking the ocean and city lights in the horizon. Overnight at the hotel.
- Jan 16 After breakfast relax and enjoy the morning on the beach or enjoy a swim in the pool on the terrace of this colonial style, lavishly appointed hotel with a view of the bay and Colombo city in the horizon. Lunch and dinner at the hotel. Leave for the airport after dinner.

The 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 tours were grand successes. The overwhelming appreciation shown by the members have encouraged us to repeat this tea tour in January 2019. The tour was described as a 'trip of a lifetime' by many members.



**Picture shows the group in the tea tasting room at John Keells Tea Brokers in Colombo, Sri Lanka.**



**You could not possibly have a fresher ‘cuppa’. Labukelle Tea Estate & Factory on the way to Nuwara Eliya.**

## **TESTIMONIALS**

**Phil & Elaine Terman – We cannot thank you enough for putting together this wonderful tea tour. This has been absolutely ‘the trip of a lifetime’ for both of us. We so enjoyed seeing all of the treasures this beautiful country has to offer, but the tea plantations were the perfect treat. I can hardly wait until my next lecture where I’ll be able to share all I have seen and learned. You put together a wonderful experience and we are grateful for your guidance and the shared knowledge of the world of Ceylon tea. We shall treasure this experience forever.**

**Fred & Sheila Duda - We just can’t thank you enough for everything you did to make our trip to Sri Lanka so wonderful. We had the time of our lives!**

**Pete & Heidi Morse - What a memorable tea tour it was indeed. One of the very best I'd say. A terrific crowd altogether and we had so much fun. It did not make any difference to us that we were not tea experts, it was just nice to be invited to all the factories and off the beaten track and share the opportunities you gave us. Thank you for a very personal tea tour!**

**Sandra Knight – I truly enjoyed my trip/tour to Sri Lanka. Being a single person, I wasn't sure how smart it was to go but it was something I wanted to do. From the moment I got on the plane I knew I made the right decision. I have been in the coffee industry for many years and wanted to learn more about tea and what a perfect way to do so. Seeing the plantations and the factories was very exciting to me. I like to know how things work and when I do I can grasp things on a very deep level. You, Lalith, were a perfect guide. Taking us to many plantations, factories, the**

Tea Institute, museum and to so many local sites. The hotels were top notch and the people were all so very kind. I thought the cost was more than reasonable and was shocked, really, by the upscale hotels we stayed at. The days were full and I always felt safe.

I also enjoyed learning about Sri Lanka and it's customs. The baby elephants. What more can I say about them, beside just too cute. Riding the elephant! The music the countryside! The countryside was like a landscape painting. Oh just thinking about it.... I was amazed at the Buddha statues and some of the sizes as well. Very beautiful. I almost forgot about the waterfalls! Simply amazing. I was so taken aback by the beauty of the country. I do regret not taking more pictures. I could go on and on. I would love to send some of my key employees on the trip and if I could go again, I'd be there in an instant.

## **TOUR PRICES**

**Per person double occupancy – 2950.00 (Land only)**  
**Single supplement – 950.00**

**Deposit of \$ 1500.00 per person is required by 15th September to reserve your space.** Group size is limited to 12 people. Deposits are refundable, less a \$250 per person cancellation fee, until 75 days prior to departure. All deposit monies will be refunded if quotas are exceeded or if the tour is cancelled because of extenuating circumstances. **Final payment is due by 15th November.** Please fill the application form below and return with your deposit.

## **TERMS & CONDITIONS**

Empire Tea Services LLC or any of its agents or associates can assume no liability for illness, injury, damage, loss or expense. Tour members are advised to obtain their own travel insurance. All participants must sign the release on the Reservation Form below. The right is reserved to cancel the tour prior to departure, in which case the entire payment will be refunded with no further obligation. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour.

## **COST INCLUDES**

- 12 nights' accommodation on Full Board (Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner) basis beginning with Dinner on Day 01 and ending with Dinner on Day 14. Excludes beverages.
- High Tea on Day 1 at the Kingsbury Hotel.
- Transportation in an air-conditioned Deluxe coach.

- The exclusive services of English speaking National Guide throughout the tour.
- All applicable Entrance Fees as per the itinerary
- Jeep Safari to the Yala National Park
- Daily mineral water service during sightseeing and transfers
- Portage at hotels.
- All applicable Government Taxes.
- All applicable Hotel Taxes and Service Charges.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- ❖ All rooms have air-conditioning. Beach resorts have rooms with sea view.
- ❖ Inland transportation by air-conditioned coach.
- ❖ Exchange rate – 1 US \$ = SL Rupees 125.00 (approximately).
- ❖ A tourist visa can be obtained online at [www.eta.gov.lk](http://www.eta.gov.lk) for US \$ 30.00
- ❖ Time difference is 11 hours ahead of EST.
- ❖ American Express, Master Card and Visa are accepted.
- ❖ International direct dialing, internet and email is available at these hotels. A complimentary Mobile Phone with direct dialing to the US will be available with the Tour Director for emergency use. However, you may purchase a cell phone with international calling for US \$ 50.00. Phone cards are readily available.
- ❖ Final itinerary may change slightly depending on weather and time available but the basic format will not change.
- ❖ If you are in the tea business, a major part of the expenses may be tax deductible. Consult your tax accountant.
- ❖ Political situation – Sri Lanka is a democratic country since independence from Britain in 1949.
- ❖ Demographics – Buddhist – 80%, Hindu – 10%, Christian – 8%, Muslim – 2%

## Please scroll down for the registration form

***PLEASE PRINT THIS FORM, FILL OUT AND MAIL TO THE ADDRESS BELOW.***

### SRI LANKA – TEA & SCENIC TOUR

January 4<sup>th</sup> – 16th 2019

Name #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Name #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Passport #1: \_\_\_\_\_ Passport #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, St, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### **TERMS & CONDITIONS**

Empire Tea Services LLC or any of its agents or associates can assume no liability for illness, injury, damage, loss or expense. Tour members are advised to obtain their own travel and medical insurance. The right is reserved to cancel the tour prior to departure, in which case the entire payment will be refunded with no further obligation. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments / Special needs:

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