

SEA to SKY

15 nights – 16 days

DAY 1 – ARRIVE COLOMBO

Assistance and transfer to Negombo for overnight stay; in case of a very late arrival, stay will be in Colombo city.

DAY 2 – NEGOMBO-ANURADHAPURA-KANDALAMA



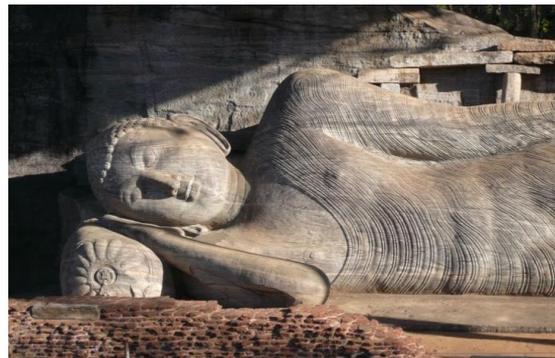
Transfer from Colombo to Anuradhapura. (Approximately 206 km and 4.5 hrs.); visit Anuradhapura. It was the first capital and undoubtedly the grandest city of the ancient Ceylon. It is the home of two World Heritage Sites. Many places of historical and archaeological interest could be visited. Sri Maha Bodhi (Sacred Bo-Tree) was brought as a sapling of the tree under which Prince Siddhartha attained to enlightenment and **it is over 2200 years old and is the oldest historically documented tree in the**

world. The Brazen Palace (2nd century B.C), the 1600 stone columns you see are all that is left of a magnificent multi-storied residence for monks. Ruwanweliseya (2nd century B.C) is the most famous of all the Dagobas. It originally depicted the perfect 'bubble shape' that modern restoration has not been able to accurately reproduce. 'Samadhi' Buddha statue (4th century AD) is one of the most famous statues, depicting the Buddha in a state of 'Samadhi' or deep meditation. Isurumuniya rock temple (3rd century B.C) is well known for its rock carvings.

Transfer from Anuradhapura to Kandalama. (Approximately 80 km and 3 hrs.).

DAY 3 – FULL DAY EXCURSION TO POLONNARUWA/SIGIRIYA

Transfer from Kandalama to Polonnaruwa. (Approximately 77 km and 2 hrs.); visit Polonnaruwa, which was the 2nd capital city of Sri Lanka built in the 11th and 12th centuries AD, and which is a world heritage site. Here you can see the ruins of the Royal Palace, the Gal Viharaya where 4 splendid statues of the Buddha in 'Upright', 'Sedentary' and 'Recumbent' postures carved out of rock could be seen, the Audience Hall, the Lotus Bath, the statue of king Parakramabahu, and the Parakrama Samudraya - a lake built by King Parakramabahu the great. There are also monuments of famous places of worship such as the Shiva Temple, the Lankathilake, the Watadage, the Galpotha, the Kiri Vehera and the remains of a former Temple of the Tooth Relic.



Transfer from Polonnaruwa to Sigiriya. (Approximately 64 km and 1.5 hrs.); climb the 5th century Sigiriya rock fortress which is a world heritage site, built by King Kashyapa (477-495 AD). The 'Lion Rock' is a citadel of unusual beauty rising 200 meters from the scrub jungle. The rock was the innermost stronghold of the 70 hectare fortified town. A moat, rampart, and extensive gardens

including the renowned water gardens ring the base of the rock. Visit the world-renowned frescoes of the 'Heavenly Maidens' of Sigiriya, which are in a sheltered pocket of the rock approached by a spiral stairway. These frescoes are painted in earth pigments on plaster. Transfer from Sigiriya to Kandalama. (Approximately 30 km and 0.5 hrs.).

DAY 4 – KANDALAM-KANDY-PERADENIYA-KANDY



Transfer from Kandalama to Peradeniya (Approximately 90 km and 2.5 hrs.); Peradeniya botanical garden was first built as a pleasure garden by a Sinhala king and was expanded by the British. It is 147 acres in extent and provides an amazing variety of trees, plants and flowers. Transfer from Peradeniya to Kandy. (Approximately 8 km and 0.5 hrs.); Kandy was the last capital of the Sri Lankan kings and is a World Heritage Site. The name "Kandy" conjures visions of splendor and magnificence. Many of the legends, traditions and folklore

are still lovingly kept alive. Drive around the Kandy Lake built by the last Sinhala king, Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe in 1798. Visit the Kandy town and bazaar, the arts and crafts center, a gem museum and a lapidary. Also visit the Temple of the Tooth Relic in Kandy. Thereafter witness a cultural show.

DAY 5 – KANDY-PINNAWALA-COLOMBO/DELHI

Transfer from Kandy to Pinnawala. (Approximately 45 km and 1 hrs.). The Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage, established in 1975, commenced with seven orphans. Today some of these orphans enjoy the fortune of seeing their grandchildren born in the same location. The original objective of establishing the orphanage inclined more towards tourism, but is soon became a conservation and educational center. With the help of local and foreign elephant experts, Pinnawela started a scientific captive-breeding program for elephants. The free movement of the herd enhanced the chances for respective individuals of both sexes to get together and mate. The nearby river played a dominant role in this regard, and in 1984, the first baby of Pinnawela was born. The success story of Pinnawela has drawn the attention of scientists from all over the world. A considerable number of books and research articles on Pinnawela have been published in several languages. The members of the Pinnawela herd have been filmed, videoed and photographed thousands of times by professionals.



Transfer from Pinnawala to Colombo. (Approximately 102 km and 2.5 hrs.). Transfer to airport for flight to Delhi; assistance and transfer to your hotel.

DAY 6 - DELHI



After leisurely Breakfast proceed for Sightseeing tour of Old Delhi - drive past Raj Ghat, the monument to Mahatma Gandhi erected on the site of his funeral pyre and an important place of pilgrimage for People from all over the world. In Old Delhi see The Jama Masjid Mosque, built by the Emperor Shah Jahan; then continue past the bustling market place of Chandni Chowk, where silver merchants ply their trade. Later in the afternoon

visit New Delhi - Delhi was established in 1911 by King George V who, feeling Calcutta was too remote, wanted a new capital for the Indian Empire. Drive by the impressive India Gate with its eternal flame, the Presidential Palace and Parliament House; then stop to visit Qutab Minar, a 200-foot high minaret and Humayun's Tomb, the first of the great Mughal Tomb complexes.

DAY 7 – DELHI/AGRA



After having your breakfast at the hotel, proceed by surface – 3+ hours' drive - early for Agra; assistance on arrival and check-in at your Hotel.

Later, a visit to the Taj Mahal - a breath taking sight as you see the monument change colours as the sun ascends the horizon; from flushed pink to yellow white to blazing orange. A fitting tribute to love and romance as the monument was built as a

tribute to the queen of Emperor Shah Jehan and today it is one of the wonders of the world. The legendary monument to love is an architectural marvel perfectly proportioned and fashioned in white marble. It stands testimony to the skill of craftsmen brought in from Persia, Turkey, France and Italy and to the 20,000 workers who toiled for 17 years in its construction. It has aptly been compared to "a drop of tear on the face of the universe", by the Indian Nobel Laureate Tagore. Taj Mahal is closed on Fridays.

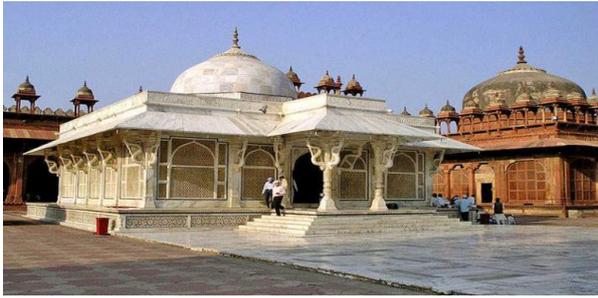
DAY 8 - AGRA

Start your tour after breakfast with a visit to the Agra Fort - where you see its palaces and the Hall of Public and Private Audience. From here, you get to see the Taj Mahal, in the distant - with the foreground of the River Yamuna. Legend has that during the period of imprisonment of Emperor Shah Jehan here, he would see the Taj Mahal as a reflection in a mirror placed next to his bed.



The days other visit includes Fatehpur Sikri and Itmad-ud-daula; Itmad-Ud-Daulah's Tomb is often described as 'jewel box' and sometimes called the *Baby Taj* – as it was considered to be a "draft" of the Taj Mahal. The tomb, built between 1622 and 1628 represents the transition between the first phase of monumental Mughal architecture - primarily built from red sandstone with marble decorations, as in Humayun's Tomb in Delhi and Akbar's tomb in Sikandra - to its second phase, based on white marble and pietra dura inlay - most elegantly realized in the Taj Mahal. The mausoleum was commissioned by Nur Jahan, the wife of Jahangir, for her father Mirza Ghiyas Beg, who had been given the title of *Itimâd-ud-Daulâ* (pillar of the state). Mirza Ghiyas Beg is also the grandfather of Mumtaz Mahal or the wife of the emperor Shah Jahan, responsible for the building of the Taj Mahal.

DAY 9 – AGRA/JAIPUR



After breakfast proceed for Jaipur by surface – a 5+ hour drive; assistance on arrival and transfer to your hotel for overnight. Enroute visit Fatehpur Sikri; Fatehpur Sikri came into being four centuries ago when Emperor Akbar, not yet 28 years old, created the first planned city in Indo-Islamic architecture. In 1568, Akbar was secure and powerful but had no son and heir. He was blessed by Sufi saint Salim Chisti living

close in Sikri Village, who prophesied the birth of three sons to him. Soon after Prince Salim was born and later came to be known as Emperor Jehangir. In gratitude for the blessing, Akbar decided to create imperial residence in Sikri, which would function as a joint capital with Agra. The city unfortunately had to be later abandoned due to the lack of water. Its fortifications, massive gateway and palaces remain in a wonderful state of preservation and include the Jamma Masjid, Panch Mahal & The Salim Chisti's Tomb set like a jewel in a courtyard of pink sandstone and enclosed by delicately carved marble screens. In the evening – temple ceremony at Birla Temple.

DAY 10 - JAIPUR

Breakfast at the Hotel. Early morning, visit the Amber Fort which for six centuries was the ancient capital of the state of Rajasthan. Visit the Jag mandir & the Sheesh Mahal (pavilion of mirrors) which reflects a single candle flame in a thousand flickering lights. Also experience the unique thrill of travelling by Elephant back to the top of the hill on which the fort is situated. The rest of the day is free to enjoy the city. Late evening, visit the local market and walk down the main street of Jaipur with shops on both side used by the locals.



Later sightseeing tour of Jaipur city. Visit the Observatory equipped with mortar instruments of remarkable size, which for sheer accuracy are difficult to beat even today. Also visit the Maharaja's City Palace, the former royal residence and now a museum housing a vast amount of artefacts. Stop by at the beautiful Hawa Mahal (the Palace of Winds), a beautifully decorated facade of 953 windows in flushed pink. Remember,

Jaipur is the most colourful and vibrant city of India and a haven for shopping!
Overnight at the Hotel.

DAY 11 – JAIPUR-DELHI

Morning is at leisure with time free for shopping; late afternoon leave for Delhi – a 5+ hour drive - and on arrival check-in at your hotel.

DAY 12 – DELHI/PARO THIMPU

In time transfer to the airport for your Paro flight. In clear weather, Druk Air's flight to Bhutan provides a wonderful view of Himalayan scenery. Whether flying along the Himalayan range from

Kathmandu or over the foothills from Kolkatta, it is a fascinating journey, culminating in an exciting descent past forested hills into the kingdom. On arrival at Paro airport, you will be met by our representative. On completion of airport formalities, there will be an interesting drive of about 2 hour's duration to Thimphu, the modern capital town of Bhutan.

DAY 13 – THIMPHU-PUNAKHA

Thimphu, perhaps the most unusual capital city in the world, is the seat of government. This bustling town is home to Bhutan's royal family, the civil servants, and foreign missions with representation in Bhutan. It is also the headquarters for a number of internationally funded development projects.



Morning visit to Trashichhodzong, the beautiful medieval fortress/monastery which houses most of the Government's office and King's Throne room. It is also the summer residence of Je Khenpo, the Chief Abbot. Proceed to the National Library which houses an extensive collection of Buddhist literature, with some works dating back several hundred years. Visit the nearby Institute for Zorig Chusum (commonly known as the Painting School), where a six year training course is given in the 13 traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan. Also visit (outside only), the National Institute of Traditional Medicine, where the medicinal herbs abundant in the kingdom are compounded and dispensed.

After lunch, visit the National Memorial Chorten. The building of this landmark was originally envisaged by Bhutan's third king, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuk ("the father of modern Bhutan") who has wished to erect monument to world peace and prosperity. Completed in 1974 after his untimely death, it serves both as a memorial to the Late King and as a monument to peace. Visit the government-run Handicrafts Emporium and privately owned crafts shops, which offer a wide range of handcrafted products, including the splendid thangka paintings and exquisitely woven textiles for which Bhutan is famous. Also visit the folk Heritage and National Textile Museums, opened in 2001.

After the visits drive to Punakha with a short stop at Dochula pass (3,050m) that heralds the most enchanting views of Bhutan.

DAY 14-PUNAKHA-PARO

Today visit to Punakha Dzong, the 17th century fortress which has played important role in building up of modern Bhutan followed by visit to local market. Then visit, Khamsum Yulley Namgyel Chorten, the newly built stupa. After that drive to Wangduephodrang visiting Dzong and local market. The district of Wangduephodrang is also famous for its bamboo products, slate and stone carvings. Drive back to Paro and check into the hotel.

DAY 15 - PARO



After breakfast drive north of Paro valley to ruins of Drukgyel Dozng. From this fort Bhutanese repelled several invasion by Tibetan armies. Nearby visit traditional Bhutanese Farm House which offers good insight into lifestyle of local people. Then take an excursion to Taktsang Monastery, the most famous of Bhutanese monasteries. It is said that Guru Rinpoche arrived here on the back of a tigress and meditated at this monastery hence it is called “Tiger’s Nest”. The excursion to monastery’s view point

takes about 5 hours for round trip. While return to Paro town visit enroute Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest and most sacred shrines of the Kingdom. Overnight at the hotel in Paro.

DAY 16 – PARO/DELHI + DEPARTURE

After breakfast drive to the airport for flight to Delhi; assistance and transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is free to rest or for last minute shopping and late-night transfer to airport for onward flight – room available till departure.

To book, please contact your travel agent as we work only with Travel Agents and Tour Operators.

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