

# TRACKS SAFARIS

## WE GET YOU CLOSER



### 12 NIGHT WILDLIFE OF SRI LANKA MID PRICED



#### Highlights of the Itinerary:

- Explore the ruins in the ancient city of Polonnaruwa
- Climb the world-famous Rock Fortress in Sigiriya
- Park drives at Wilpattu and Yala National Parks
- Visit Hurulu Forest Reserve in search for wild Asian elephants
- Whale and Dolphin watching tour off Mirissa Sea
- Guided walk inside the Dutch fort in Galle



### **Day 1**

On arrival into Colombo's Bandaranayake International Airport, Katunayake you will be welcomed by Tracks Safaris representatives and transferred to Ambarella Lodge in a private vehicle (approximately 30 minutes' drive). **Spend one night at Ambarella Lodge – Meals Included Breakfast and Dinner**

#### **Ambarella Lodge**

*Located in the heart of a fully functional, 25 acres coconut estate, only 30 minutes' drive from the airport and on the road to the main cultural sights, Ambarella Lodge is an ideal starting or ending point for your Sri Lankan experience. Large, well-equipped rooms and terraces overlooking the pool and the garden ensure a comfortable and relaxing holiday. A pavilion by the pool hosts the Ambarella Café which proposes fresh fruits and delicious local meals, all based on ingredients mainly produced on the estate. Surrounded by exotic plants and coconut trees, this charming, nine-room lodge offers a unique opportunity to get acquainted with authentic Sri Lankan village life and interact with the local people in the area.*

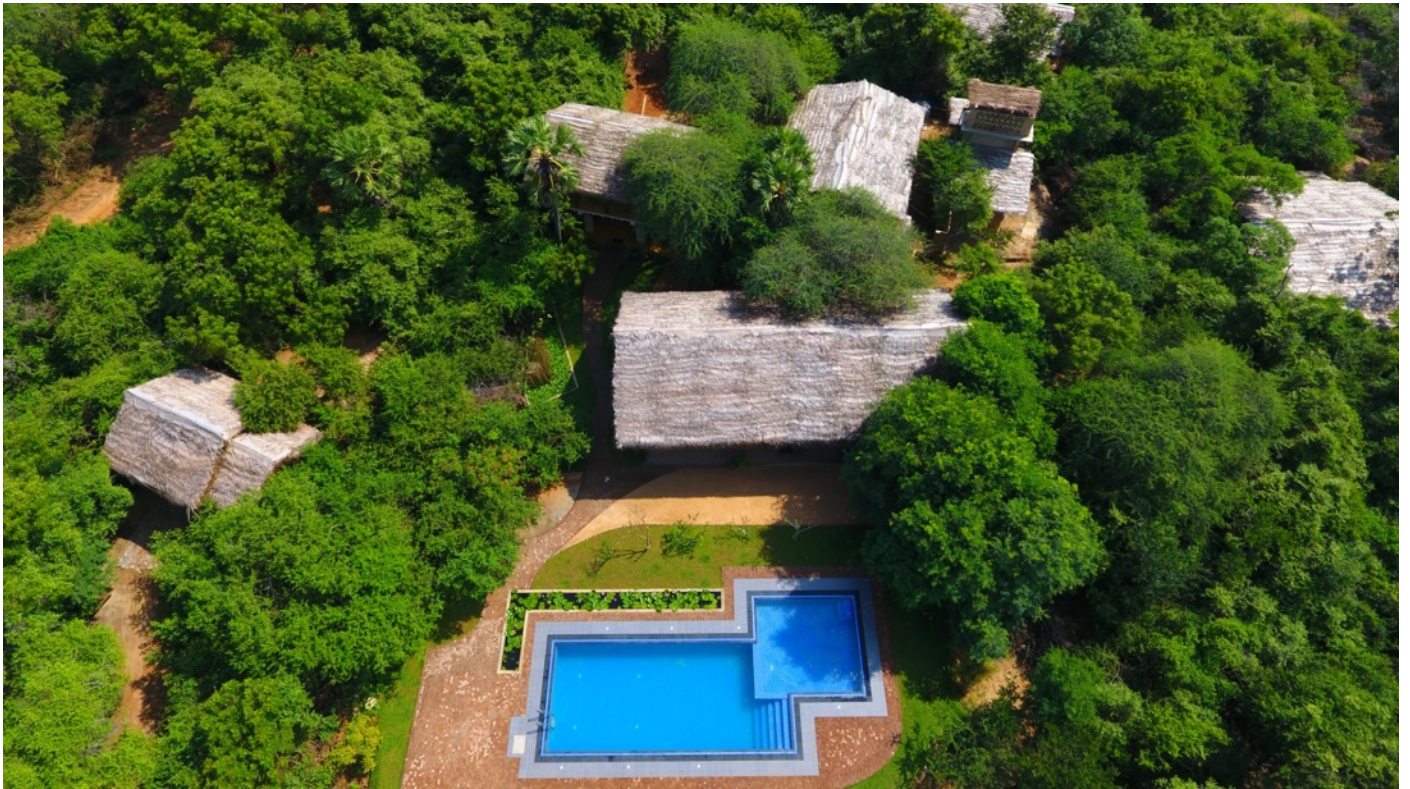
### **Day 2**

After breakfast, proceed to Wilpattu (approximately 3 ½ hour drive). On arrival check-in to Cloud Nine Lanka Resort.

#### **Cloud Nine Lanka Resort, Wilpattu:**

*Situated in remote Wanathaviluwa village, within 30 minutes' drive to Wilpattu, Eluwankulama entrance, Cloud Nine Lanka Resort is a minimalistic nature resort with a homely feel. It features 10 chalets with private balconies, a restaurant with local and western cuisine, outdoor swimming pool. The chalets are equipped with air conditioning, a flat-screen TV with satellite channels, private bathroom, tea/coffee making facilities and Wi-fi on request. Surrounded by a well-preserved ecosystem, Cloud nine is an ideal place to connect with nature while enjoying the peace and tranquillity and to explore the wilderness in Wilpattu National Park from a less frequented entrance.*





Rest of the day at leisure or engage in one of many activities and excursions offered by Cloud Nine. Go on bird watching by the nearby lake with a naturalist, have a sunset mocktail / tea & coffee / herbal drink at fishermen's hut near the lagoon, join an exclusive night trekking experience in the forest patch around the property. (Cost of these activities to be paid direct to the resort). **Spend two nights at Cloud Nine Lanka Resort, Wilpattu - Meals Included – Breakfast and Dinner**



### Day 3

Spend the full day exploring the Wilpattu National Park. You have two park drives in the morning and afternoon with a naturalist in a jeep. The morning park drives begin at around 0530 hours. Your afternoon game drive begins around 1400 hours, returning at sunset



### **Wilpattu National Park**

*Wilpattu is Sri Lanka's oldest and largest national park. Popularly dubbed as 'The land of the lakes', the park is famous for its picturesque villus and dry evergreen jungle. Wilpattu has a high density of both leopard and sloth bear. Other mammals include Asian elephant, jackal, mugger crocodile, sambar, spotted deer and buffalo are among the larger animals regularly encountered. The Park is also an excellent birding location particularly in the winter months with over 230 recorded species including a variety of raptors such as crested serpent, changeable hawk and white-bellied sea eagles, brown fish owl. Among the endemics are the Sri Lanka grey hornbill, Sri Lanka junglefowl, Sri Lanka woodshrike. The park's lakes and waterbodies (villus) are recognised as a Ramsar Site of international importance. A large number of water birds and waders are seasonal migrants from northern India and central Asia wintering near the villus and waterholes. Longer drives are possible including visiting Kudurumalai point along the Wilpattu's coastline overlooking Portugal Bay. This is believed to be the location where Prince Vijaya and the first group of Indian settlers set foot to Sri Lanka some 2500 years ago. The area is characterized by steep cliffs and vulcanised rock remain. It is a spectacular spot to see sea eagles flying close, and distant view over the rich waters of the Indian Ocean.*



### **Day 4**

After breakfast proceed to Habarana (approximately. 2-hour drive). Sitting on a major road junction almost in the midpoint between Polonnaruwa and Dambulla (Close to Sigiriya), the small village of Habarana is a convenient base from which to visit any of the Cultural Triangle's major sights. On Arrival into Habarana check in to Cinnamon Lodge. Rest of the day at leisure.

### **Cinnamon Lodge**

*Cinnamon Lodge is set in a tranquil and picturesque 27-acre wooded location next to a beautiful lake. The large gardens are filled with gigantic tropical trees and waterways that provide home to a variety of birds, grey monkeys and rock squirrels. Its architectural design was inspired by the remains of Ritigala which was a monastery that dates back to the 6th Century. Luxurious two-storey chalets with verandas and balconies complete a feeling of comfort and relaxation*

**Spend two nights at Cinnamon Lodge, Habarana - Meals Included Breakfast and Dinner**





## Day 5

Today, after an early breakfast, drive to Sigiriya (approximately 30 minutes' drive). On arrival into Sigiriya you will climb one of the island's most spectacular sights in Sri Lanka - the 5th century rock fortress of Sigiriya

### **Sigiriya Rock Fortress**

*Referred to as 'The Lion Rock' by locals, Sigiriya became the capital during the reign of King Kashyapa in the 5th century CE. After slaying his own father, King Dhatusena of Anuradhapura to take the throne and fearing a retaliatory attack from the rightful heir Moggallana who fled to neighbouring India, the new King constructed his royal palace on the summit of this 200-metre-high rock within a fortress for his own protection. Walk through the meticulously landscaped Royal Gardens and ascend towards the summit where only ruins of the royal palace now remain. A visit to the fresco gallery with its ancient paintings of the King's maids in waiting and the Mirror Wall with ancient inscriptions that closely match the modern-day Sinhalese language In 495 CE, Moggallana returned from his exile, defeated the usurping King, and reinstated Anuradhapura as the capital. Sigiriya was then used as a Buddhist monastery until the 14th century prior to being mysteriously abandoned.*

From Sigiriya, proceed to Polonnaruwa (approximately 1 ½ hours' drive). On arrival explore the ancient city of Polonnaruwa, the second capitol city of Sri Lanka.

### **The Ancient City of Polonnaruwa**

*The ruins of the ancient city of Polonnaruwa are rather refreshing, better preserved and spread in a smaller area compared to Anuradhapura. Remains of the ruin city are compact enough to offer an impressive and delightful image of the medieval Sri Lanka for its visitors within a short period of time. In its heyday, the city was encircled by strong walls and inhabited by hundreds of people. At the centre of the city is the royal palace complex. The monuments around the terrace north to the palace complex are some of the most important religious buildings. It includes one of best-preserved example of a shelter house (Vatadage) in the country. It regarded as one the finest and advance architectural designs in this era. This historical city consists of over*



30 remarkable ancient buildings. The royal shrine (Gal Viharaya) is the most fascinating monument. It contains numerous works of arts which represent the Sinhalese Buddhist art at its finest, and their mastery of rock sculpture. There are statues which displays in reclining, sitting and standing postures of the Buddha. The reclining posture represents the ultimate break from the endless cycle of life and rebirth by an enlightened soul, before attaining release or nirvana.

After your explorations have your lunch at a local restaurant in Polonnaruwa which serves many varieties of traditional Sri Lankan cuisine cooked over stone and wood fires. It's a family run restaurant with large mud huts for seating. After lunch, venture on a Jeep Safari at Minneriya or Hurulu National Park to look for wild Asian elephant with your guide in a shared jeep.

### ***Elephants in Minneriya /Kaudulla national park or at Hurulu Forrest***

Each afternoon, many individual elephants come out of the forest in to the open to graze on the fresh green pasture by the water's edge at Minneriya and Kaudulla national parks or at Hurulu forest reserve. You have excellent opportunities here to observe the social dynamics of the Asian Elephant as the large bulls in musth compete among each other and seek the females within the herd, while young calves with carefree abandon get up to their mischievous antics often to the displeasure of its alert mothers within the herd. Your guide will be knowledgeable on where the elephants are encountered. Which is dependent on the monsoon. During the wet season, the herds disperse from Minneriya and Kaudulla, moving towards nearby Hurulu National Park and are scattered amongst the tall grasses and scrub jungle vegetation. In any of these parks, a variety of birds found in the dry zone including Indian Roller, Sri Lanka Jungle fowl, Indian Peafowl, Blue-tailed and Green Bee-eaters along with raptors such as Changeable Hawk Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Shikra may also be seen.

Return to Cinnamon Lodge and relax. Overnight stay at Cinnamon Lodge, Habarana





## Day 6

Today after breakfast at Cinnamon Lodge you will enjoy a scenic drive to Nuwara Eliya through the beautiful hill country of Sri Lanka (approximately 4 hours' drive). On arrival in Nuwara Eliya and check in to Jetwing St. Andrew's. **Spend two nights at Jetwing St. Andrew's - Meals Included – Breakfast and Dinner**

### **Jetwing St. Andrew's**

*Over the course of history, Jetwing St. Andrew's has transformed from a 19th century colonial mansion to a magnificent hotel in Nuwara Eliya, all the while staying true to the core value that gives charm – the welcoming nature of a home. Intricately refurbished, all rooms at Jetwing St. Andrew's feature the nostalgia of traditional bedchambers fitted with modern amenities to suit your lifestyle for a memorable stay at this hill country home of Sri Lankan hospitality.*



## Day 7

Leave early this morning with a packed breakfast to explore Horton Plains National Park. Your guide/naturalist who will accompany you during the walk will meet you at the hotel around 0500 hours (approximately 1 hour 30 minutes' drive). On arrival at the entrance you take a hike through the Horton Plains national park.

### **Horton Plains National Park:**

*Horton Plains is Sri Lanka's highest elevated national park lying approximately 2,150 m (7,000 feet) above sea level and comprises of cloud forests and open grassland. An early morning start gets you into the Horton Plains National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site as the forest awakes. You can take a long walk along the nature trails to a viewpoint known as World's End with spectacular views of the surrounding countryside. On the walk back you can stop over to see the impressive Baker's fall in full flow.*

Afterwards, proceed to Nuwara Eliya and visit a working Tea estate and a factory. Rest of the day at leisure Overnight at Jetwing St. Andrew's, Nuwara Eliya



### **Tea plantations and factory visit**

*Sri Lanka is one of the world's largest exporters of tea with a history dating back to 1867 when it was first introduced to the country. The hill country is abundant with many tea plantations and factories along its picturesque countryside, which provides the ideal climate for high grown tea. Estate tea pluckers can be seen deftly plucking tea which they fill into large baskets carried on their backs. Visiting a tea plantation and a factory is a rewarding experience as you will get the opportunity to learn the whole process of the tea production and to taste a freshly brewed cup of world-renowned Ceylon tea.*

### **Day 8**

Today, after breakfast at Jetwing St. Andrew's, depart on a long but scenic drive through the hills, valleys and remote villages to Yala (approximately 4 ½ hours' drive). On arrival into Yala and check in to Wild Culture, Yala. The rest of the day at leisure. Or optional game drive. **Spend two nights at Wild Culture, Yala**  
**- Meals Included – Breakfast and Dinner**

### **Wild Culture, Yala**

*Wild Culture is a small but comfortable lodge situated in close proximity to the Yala National Park and Sri Lanka's pristine southern coast. It provides a simple, but elegant experience with architecture that perfectly synergizes with nature. The property holds 6 fully air-conditioned villa rooms with scenic views of paddy fields, a pool bar, and an open-air restaurant which has been built to complement the environment perfectly well. Enjoy star-class epicurean delights, prepared by a team of skilled chefs. Featuring flavours from home and abroad, your every gastronomic desire will be fulfilled the dinner experiences near the pool are heightened by the sounds of nature, a canopy of stars, and fresh air.*



### **Day 9**

A full day exploring the Yala National Park. You have two park drives included – one in the morning and one in the afternoon - with your naturalist in a private jeep. The morning park drive begins at around 0530 hours. Your afternoon game drive begins around 1430 hours, returning at sunset. Overnight at Wild Culture, Yala.



### **Yala National Park**

*Yala National Park is located in the south-east corner of Sri Lanka and is the most popular destination for wildlife viewing. Leopards are the star attraction at Yala and Block I is believed to have one of the highest concentrations of these big cats in the world. Leopards however are elusive by nature and we recommend a minimum of three to four game drives to have the best opportunities for good encounters. Asian elephant, sloth bear, jackal, sambar, spotted deer, buffalo, wild boar and the grey langur are among the other larger mammals that may be seen.*

*During the dry season which spans from June to September, large concentrations of mugger crocodile can be seen in the dwindling waterholes. Yala is also an excellent birding destination with close to 300 avian species recorded; Indian peafowl and Sri Lanka jungle fowl, changeable hawk eagle, painted stork, Malabar pied hornbills, chestnut, green and blue-tailed bee-eaters are among the species seen regularly in Yala. The varied landscapes from lagoons, beaches to rocky outcrops immersed among the scrub jungle are also a treat to the eye as you search out the park's wildlife.*

### **Day 10**

Today, after breakfast at Wild Culture, drive from Yala to Mirissa (approximately 2 ½ hours' drive). On arrival check in to Lantern Boutique Hotel. Rest and relax rest of the day while enjoying the beautiful south cast beaches of Sri Lanka. **Spend three nights at Lantern Boutique Hotel, Mirissa - Meals Included – Breakfast only**

### **Lantern Boutique Hotel, Mirissa**

*Seamlessly poised on the Southern coast of Sri Lanka and combined with its panoramic scenery, this beachfront villa can soothe your nerves and offer you a complete relaxation on your holiday. This villa features six large well-appointed bedrooms with neatly decorated private lounge spaces with lounge chairs to allow you to enjoy the scenery around. A perfect combination of indoor living space and open-plan designs overlooking the Indian Ocean.*





## **Day 11**

A highlight awaits today - early this morning you will go whale watching off Mirissa's coast on a privately chartered vessel (approximately 4-hour experience – depends on sightings).

### **Whale Watching**

*Sri Lanka is also one of the best places in the world to see blue whales. The island enjoys a unique position in the Indian Ocean, with the shoreline unusually close to the continental shelf, the point of deepening marine life, while yet supplying nutrients from the coast. Therefore, the deep seas, which provides a habitat for whales easier to reach by boat, are good conditions for whales, especially sperm and blue whales. Almost 90 per cent of whales are guaranteed during the whale watching season.*

*Start early morning for the greatest conditions for whale watching and the calm waters. You will sail towards the Indian Ocean by boarding a modern catamaran off Mirissa with a professional team, safety equipment, a well-equipped kitchen where the chef serves a delicious full breakfast and a 3-course lunch. Once the guide spots the whales, you are invited to acquire the greatest views of the whales up to the top deck or front of the boat. After the whale watching, you'll head back towards shore, anchoring on the way for the chance to jump into the water and try some stand-up paddle boarding or snorkelling. In the middle of the day, the chef will start serving a snack on board as you sail back.*



After your whale watching experience return to your resort. In the late afternoon enjoy a guided walk in the 17th to 18th century Galle Fort with an expert guide. Overnight at Lantern Boutique Hotel, Mirissa.

### **Dutch Fort Galle**

*Upon meeting your host at the new entrance of Galle Fort, stroll along with three of the 14 bastions, all with mountain canons to protect it from outside invasions. The moon bastion showcases 19 canons, the biggest number in the fort and the Black Fort which is said to have been the home of firearms and gun powder. Each bastion has its unique characteristics. Take a walk along cobblestone pathways and navigate the cafes, hotels and charming old houses owned by Galle families to gain insights into their history, culture and lifestyle. After paying attention to many fascinating myths and stories about the intriguing history of the fort, your host will*



*explain the tsunami in 2004 and how much it impacted the modern Galle fort culture before finishing a tour on this iconic lighthouse overlooking a resting Japanese Peace Pagoda.*



**Day 12**

Day at leisure for independent activities. Overnight at Lantern Boutique Hotel, Mirissa

**Day 13**

Transfer from Hotel to Bandaranaike International Airport for your flight home (approximately 2 ½ hour drive).

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