

# TRACKS SAFARIS

## WE GET YOU CLOSER



### 9 NIGHT SRI LANKA WILDLIFE, CULTURE AND BEACH



#### Highlights of the Itinerary:

- Private game drives in Minneriya and Wilpattu National Parks
- Climb the awe inspiring Sigiriya Rock Fortress
- Whale watching excursion in a Catamaran Cruise
- Beach Stay in East coast of Sri Lanka
- Guided bush walk with an expert naturalist

## Day 1

On arrival into Colombo's Bandaranayake International Airport, Katunayake you are welcomed by Tracks Safaris representative and transferred to your hotel in Kotugoda (approximately ½ hour drive). Check-in to The Wallawwa and spend the rest of the day at leisure.

**Spend one night at The Wallawwa Resort in a Garden Suite and your stay is on bed and breakfast basis**

### ***The Wallawwa, Kotugoda***

*Nestled amongst three acres of magnificent manicured gardens, The Wallawwa is an old colonial manor house which has been lovingly restored to a luxury private hideaway.*

*The Wallawwa boutique hotel offers colonial charm and exceptional service within five acres of tropical landscaped gardens. 17 tastefully furnished bedrooms and suites, spa, a la carte restaurant and a dedicated team of butlers ensures your every wish is catered for. The proximity to Colombo's Bandaranaike International Airport, only 30 minutes away, makes The Wallawwa an excellent choice for those who wish to have a relaxing stopover at the beginning of their holiday after their long inbound flight. Sit back and indulge in sumptuous cuisine, revitalising spa treatments, a leisurely swim and a superb night's sleep.*



## Day 2

Enjoy your breakfast at The Wallawwa. Afterwards, meet your chauffeur guide and then proceed to Wilpattu (approximately 3 ½ hours' drive). On arrival check in to Leopard Trails Camp in time for lunch.

In the afternoon enjoy a game drive in Wilpattu National Park with a specialist naturalist in a shared jeep.

**Spend three nights at Leopard Trails, Wilpattu in a Deluxe Tent and your stay is on All Inclusive basis**

### ***Leopard Trails, Wilpattu:***

*Leopard Trails bespoke tented safaris redefine the original tented safari with convenient modern-day amenities, all the while staying true to the romantic ambience of a by-gone British colonial era filled with adventure. Mobile Camping is the most authentic form of safari, a true immersion into the sights and sounds of the wilderness. Leopard Trails includes accommodation in large ensuite tents with alfresco showers, morning and evening park drives in customized safari game viewing vehicles.*





### **Day 3**

Spend the full day exploring the Wilpattu National Park. You have two park drives included – one in the morning and one in the afternoon - with your naturalist in a shared jeep. The morning park drive begins at around 0530 hours. Your afternoon game drive begins around 1400 hours, returning at sunset. Overnight stay at Leopard Trails, Wilpattu.

#### ***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**

Early morning we have arranged a guided bush walk conducted in the wilderness areas surrounding Leopard Trails camp to catch sights that are best seen at a slower pace. (approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours walk). The walk concentrates on 'the smaller things' that the jungle has to offer and is expertly guided by a member of Leopard Trails guiding team, who is well acquainted with the area and the many interesting

sights and sounds that you may encounter. The guide will also give you a brief introduction to the art of tracking by scouring the ground for animal tracks and signs.

Return to the camp for a well-earned breakfast and later in the afternoon enjoy a game drive in Wilpattu national park. Overnight stay at Leopard Trails.



### **Day 5**

This morning we have booked a last game drive at Wilpattu National Park with your specialist naturalist in a shared vehicle. After your game drive return to Leopard Trails for a late breakfast.

After breakfast proceed to Water Garden Resort, Sigiriya (approximately 2 ½ hour drive). On arrival check in to Water Garden Resort, Sigiriya and relax.

### **Water Garden Resort Sigiriya**

*Water Garden Sigiriya - where luxury meets nature surrounded by lakes and water channels. The breathtakingly beautiful Sigiriya hotel boasts a modern-day water harvesting design revisiting the 2,000-year-old water garden at the base of Sigiriya Rock.*

Later in the afternoon visit the awe inspiring Sigiriya Rock, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and climb to the summit. (approximately 15 minutes' drive).

**Spend two nights at Water Garden, Sigiriya in a Superior Deluxe Villa and your stay is on Half Board basis**

### **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 with 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 transcripts that closely match the modern-day Sinhalese language, should also not be missed. In 495 CE, Moggallana returned from his exile and defeated the King re-instating Anuradhapura as the capital. Sigiriya was then used as a Buddhist monastery until the 14th century prior to being mysteriously abandoned.*



## **Day 6**

A bush day today - after an early breakfast you will drive from Sigiriya to Polonnaruwa (approximately 1 hour drive). You will be out for the full day.

Arrive in Polonnaruwa and seek out the endemic toque macaques and other primates with your expert guide.

### ***Primate Walk with an expert guide.***

*Polonnaruwa is widely regarded to be among the top locations in the country for watching primates. All three species of monkey- the toque macaque and the canopy dwelling purple-faced leaf monkey (both endemics) and the grey langur can be observed here. Polonnaruwa's 'Temple Troop' have been featured in numerous natural history documentaries are a part of the world's longest running study on primates since 1968. The monkeys are habituated to the presence of humans enabling excellent opportunities to observe their social interactions at close-range. Whether play fighting, feeding or grooming each other there is never a dull moment when watching monkeys. Walk with an expert guide amongst the ruins in Polonnaruwa to observe the antics of the langurs and macaques.*

Afterwards explore the ancient city of Polonnaruwa with lunch at a local restaurant in Polonnaruwa – a feast of curries!

### ***Ancient city of Polonnaruwa***

*Known as the second ancient kingdom of Sri Lanka, Polonnaruwa has archaeological remains of ancient structures of governance, temples and statues from between the 10th and 13th centuries. Polonnaruwa became a major city after King Vijayabahu I defeated the Cholas and re-established the capital in 1070. While King Vijayabahu is credited with the development of Polonnaruwa the real change came with his grandson King Parakramabahu who established extensive irrigation and waterways fed by the enormous manmade*

reservoir *Parakrama Samudraya* that lies to the south of the city and acts as a protective barrier. It is said that the man-made tank is so vast that if you stood on one side of it, you would not be able to see the other side due to its enormity. *Polonnaruwa* is a UNESCO listed world heritage site.



Later in the afternoon go on a game drive either to in the Minneriya / Kaudulla National Park or Hurulu forest reserve with your guide.

### ***Minneriya National Park***

*Numerous herds of elephant wander across Sri Lanka, and during the drier months many come together searching for fresh fodder, and water. The 3rd and 4th century reservoirs of Minneriya, Kaudula, and Giritale were part of extensive irrigation schemes established by the Anuradhapura kingdom. Today they are the core of three interlinked national parks. As the waters recede small groups gather here and often congregate into loose gatherings of up to 150-200 elephant. This is a great opportunity to observe the social dynamics of the Asian elephant, family groups under the guidance of a matriarch, young calves being mischievous, and wandering bulls joining for a few days. This is best between mid-March and October.*

*During the wet season (October to January), the herds disperse from Minneriya and Kaudulla, moving towards nearby Hurulu Forest Reserve and are scattered amongst the tall grasses and scrub jungle. 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 and shikra may also be seen.*

Return to Water Garden Resort and relax. Overnight stay at Water Garden, Sigiriya.

### **Day 7**

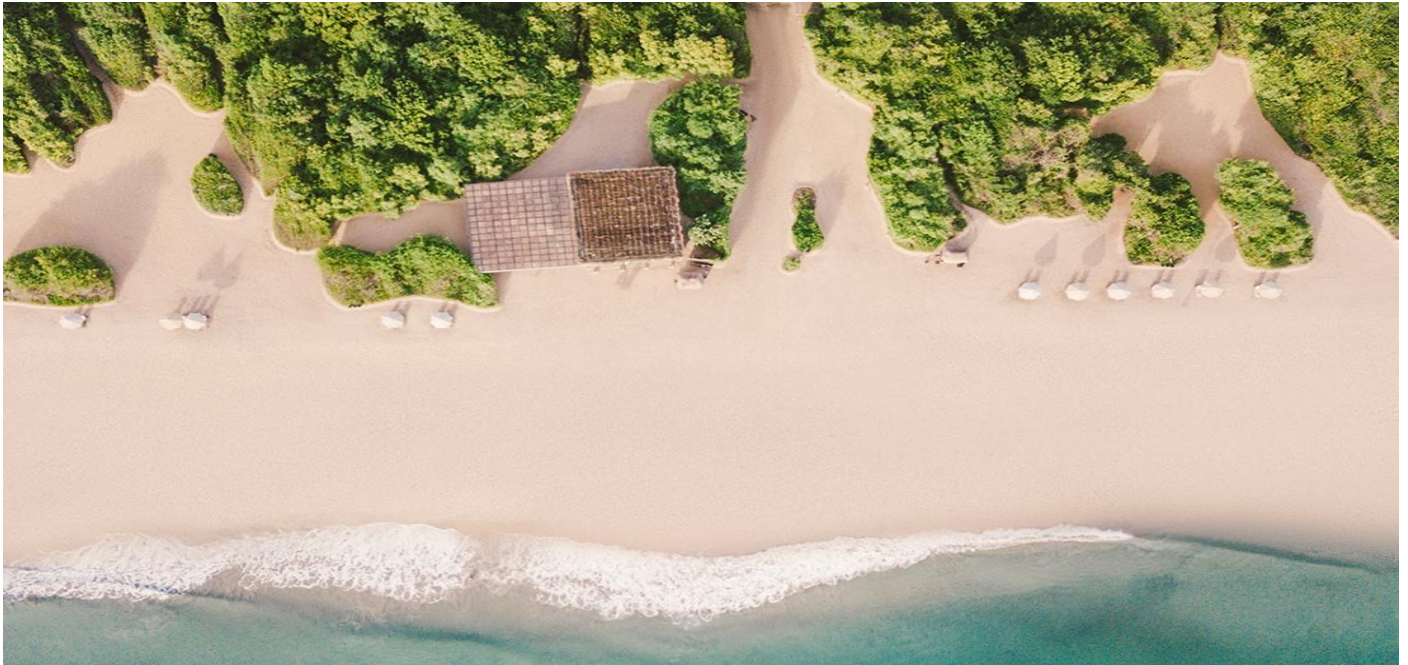
After breakfast proceed to Trincomalee (approximately 2 ½ hours' drive). On arrival check in to Jungle Beach resort and relax. You have the whole day at leisure to enjoy the facilities of the hotel.

**Spend three nights at Jungle Beach Resort, Kuchchaveli in a Beach Cabin and your stay is on Half board basis**



### **Jungle Beach, Trincomalee**

*Parallel with a long beach is a strip of coastal jungle teeming with birds and small creatures. Near the little coastal village of Kuchchaveli to the north of Trincomalee, on the eastern seaboard of Sri Lanka, lies Jungle Beach. Its 48 luxurious villas of modern design crafted from indigenous materials as to appear born of the jungle and in harmony with the natural surroundings. Many villas offering spectacular views of the ocean. Each villa tucked deeply within luscious foliage, offering utmost privacy and seclusion. Set within a secluded 10-acre reserve, sandwiched between the vast Indian Ocean and a lagoon teeming with life, this luxury beach resort has access to over 4km of quiet beaches, patches of mangroves and endless pursuits.*



### **Day 8**

Early morning with packed breakfast drive to Dutch bay in Trincomalee for a whale and dolphin watching experience (approximately 45 minutes' drive). Arrive in Dutch bay and board a private sail boat and start cruising in search for whales and dolphins.

### **Trincomalee Whale and Dolphin watching**

*Trincomalee on Sri Lanka's east coast is the island's second location for watching blue whales and Sri Lanka's marvellous marine life. The deep waters around Trincomalee's natural harbour can often result in the whales coming very close to land and are occasionally seen from Swami Rock, a view point dominating the harbour. The sightings of blue whales at Trincomalee are usually between the months of April through to September. Pods of spinner dolphins in their hundreds may also be encountered on most mornings during this period while bottlenose dolphins, orcas (killer whales) and sperm whales are also seen.*

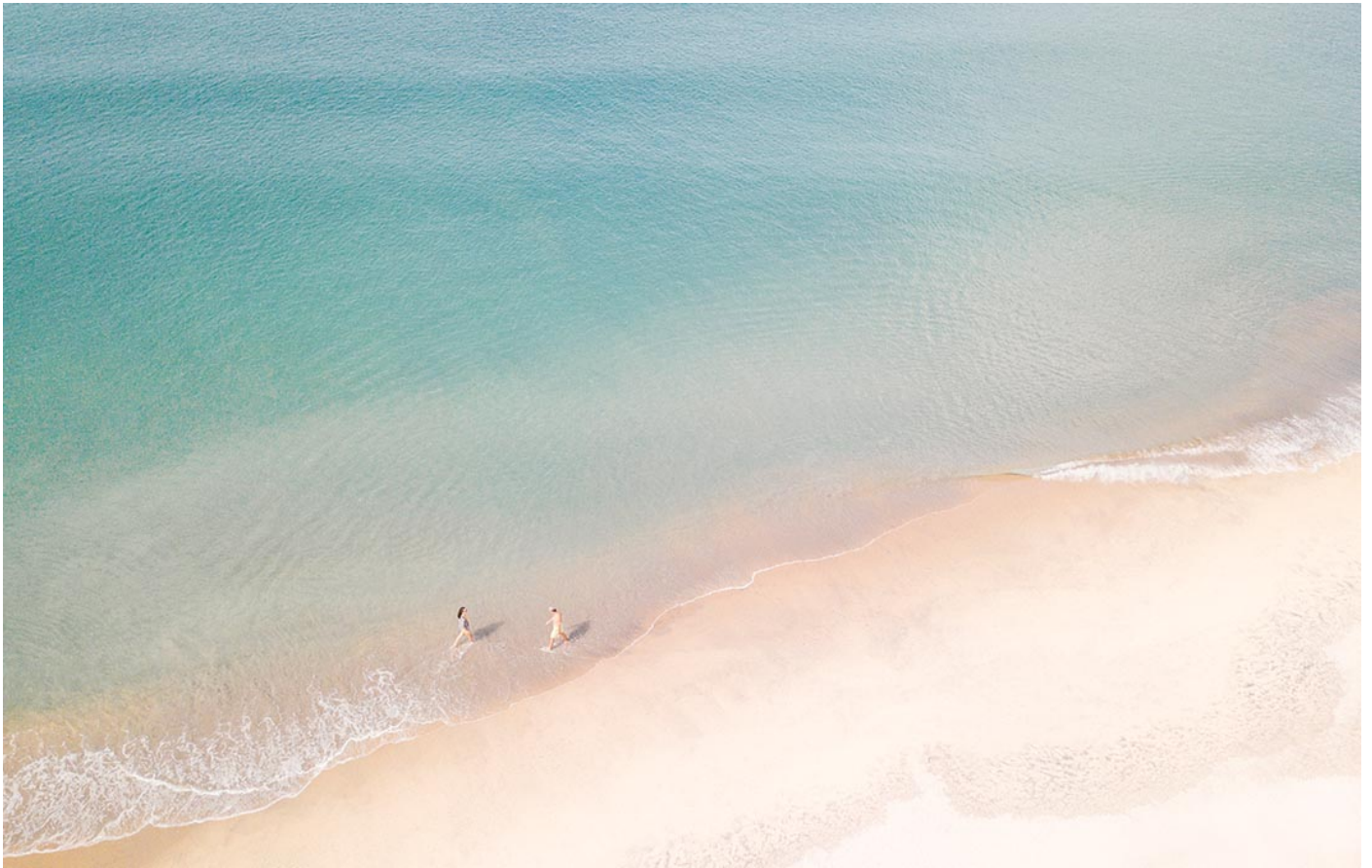
Later return to your hotel and spend the rest of the day at leisure. If you feel active, you can make an optional (pay locally) visit Pigeon Island National Park with the opportunity to snorkel among the surrounding coral reefs (approximately 20-minute boat ride). Overnight stay at Jungle Beach, Trincomalee.

### **Day 9**

Enjoy the full day at leisure for independent activities or you can simply relax by the beach and enjoy the Indian Ocean. Overnight stay at Jungle Beach, Trincomalee.

### **Day 10**

Transfer from Hotel to Bandaranaike International Airport for your departure flight home (approximately 5 ½ hour drive).



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