

Karl Watson Tours - Sri Lanka

15th February - 28th February 2025



KARL WATSON TOURS



Our Travel Style

Our global network of local experts deliver the types of experiences that can't be Googled. Immersive trips that enable you to explore authentic local culture in a sustainable, experience-rich way. We love the highlights, but the real magic for us happens well away from a beaten path, the real life experiences you won't find in a search engine.

Karl Watson Tours - Sri Lanka 14 days / 13 nights

About Your Trip

Start Location

Negombo

Finish Location

Colombo

Accommodation

11 nights hotel

2 nights camping

Rooming Requirements

Twin Share / Double

Included Meals

Breakfast (13)

Lunch (2)

Dinner (6)

Transport

Air-conditioned vehicle throughout

Leader/Guide

English Speaking Leader throughout

Included Activities

Per Daily itinerary

Entrance/Admission Fees

Where applicable with included activities

Airport Transfers

Arrival and departure transfers are included based on group transfer (Group basis)
Flight details are needed 30 days in advance

Support

24-hour support from our local office: +94 76 831 6000

Exclusions

- International Flights
- Any visas required
- Services not mentioned in the itinerary
- Late check out at hotels
- Meals and drinks not mentioned in the itinerary
- Drinks with included lunches and dinners
- Tips for leaders, guide and driver
- Expenditure of personal nature
- Personal Insurance
- Optional activities

Safe and responsible travel, always.

As you look to get back on the road, we continue to ensure our trips are safe for everyone. That includes our travellers, our leaders and crew and the people we visit along the way. Our health and safety policies follow recommendations from the World Health Organization and the World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) Safe Travel protocols for tour operators. Before we resume trips in any destination, our itineraries undergo a comprehensive risk assessment and audit, while leaders and suppliers will complete COVID-19 health and safety training. We have also introduced specific policies around testing and vaccination for your safety.



Who we are

For over 30 years we've been taking travellers around the globe, on small group tours with like-minded Intrepid people. Our extensive COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines ensure your wellbeing is looked after during your travels.



Safe travels

We're with you every step of the way through our value chain - from our suppliers, to our on ground operations and leaders.



Certified B Corp

When we became certified as the world's largest travel B Corp in 2018, it was not only our official pledge to be a responsible business, but also a promise to be the best travel company for the world.

About your Tour Leader

Tour leader

On this trip you will be accompanied by one of our tour leaders. The aim of the tour leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible.

Your leader will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the places visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We aim to support local guides who have specialised knowledge of the regions we visit. If you were interested in delving deeper into the local culture at a specific site or location then your leader can recommend a local guide service in most of the main destinations of your trip.

Karl Watson Tours - Sri Lanka Itinerary

Day 1: 15th February 2025

Colombo

Meals Included: Welcome Dinner

Welcome to Sri Lanka!

Ayubowan! Welcome to Sri Lanka. When you arrive at Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo, you'll be met by an Intrepid representative and transferred to your hotel in nearby Negombo. Here, you'll meet your leader and fellow travellers at a 5:30pm welcome meeting. (Standard Check in time at the hotel 1400 Hours)

If you arrive early, maybe take some time to relax on the beach under the blue sky. After your welcome meeting, your leader will take you to a local restaurant for the welcome dinner. Sri Lankan food is famous for its rich scents, spices and flavours, and this evening you'll find out why as you sample some local favourites.

Arrival Transfer

- Included on a group basis

Accommodation

Ruvisha Beach Hotel, Negombo or similar

No. 200, Poruthota Road, Palangathurei, Kochchikade, 11500 Negombo, Sri Lanka

Standard Check in for Ruvisha Beach Hotel is 14.00, early check in's will be at the hotels discretion. There will be a room to leave your luggage if your room isn't ready and you would like to enjoy the local area.

Day 2: 16th February 2025

Sigiriya/Dambulla

Meals Included: Breakfast

Rise early this morning for a visit to the Negombo fish market. Morning is the best time to visit the market – your leader will help you navigate the organised frenzy of vendors displaying things like crabs, lobsters and squid. Then, say goodbye to Negombo and make the drive to Sigiriya/Dambulla, where you'll spend the next two nights.

Check in to the hotel and head to Sigiriya Lion Rock. One of Sri Lanka's premier sights, this dramatic rocky outcrop rising from the surrounding plains is topped by a ruined palace. Hike up to Pidurangala Rock for a beautiful sunset view of Sigiriya Lion Rock. Your leader will share stories of the ancient civilisation that once lived here as you climb – it's a steep hike but the far-reaching views from the top are worth it. Return to your hotel upon completion.

Included Activities

- Negombo Fish Market Visit
- Sigiriya Lion Rock Fortress Visit

Accommodation

Sigiriana Resort by Thilanka or similar

Day 3: 17th February 2025

Sigiriya/Dambulla – Knuckles

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Today you'll head out on a relaxed jeep safari for about 3 hours through the nearby Minneriya National Park. The park is home to a mix of evergreen forest and scrublands – look out for sambar deer, leopards and

elephants roaming the wild.

After the safari, travel by private vehicle to the Knuckles Mountain Range – your home for the next two nights. Named after its striking visual likeness to human knuckles, this UNESCO World Heritage site features 34 mountains that range from 900 to 2000 m. Surrounded by dense forest, waterfalls and terraced rice fields, they are home to some of Sri Lanka's best hiking trails. Tonight, get closer to nature as you set up camp next to the pristine waters and natural rock pools of the Thelgamu Oya stream. To keep you fresh for tomorrow's hike your activity is limited to an evening walk around the village before relaxing by the riverside with a group dinner.

Included Activities

- Morning Wildlife Jeep Safari at Minneriya National Park

Accommodation

Knuckles Campsite (Basic Camping Experience)

Day 4: 18th February 2025

Knuckles Region

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Today you'll head out early for a full-day guided hike along the Manigala Trek through the Knuckles region. Start hiking after breakfast and wind your way through emerald forests and hillsides, past cliffs and alongside fast-flowing rivers. Maybe stop to explore a few of the villages along the way, which are surrounded by sweeping rice terraces. Have a picnic lunch by the river and continue up the stone and dirt trail all the way up to the imposing Manigala Rock, for the panoramic views of the peaks and valley below.

After taking in the views, make your way back down to camp to enjoy a hearty dinner after a long but rewarding day of hiking.

Included Activities

- Hiking in Knuckles Mountain Range

Accommodation

Knuckles Campsite (Basic Camping Experience)

Day 5: 19th February 2025

Knuckles Region, Kandy

Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

Begin the day with a moderate hike through the forest to Knuckles' renowned Mini World's End – an observation point overlooking the Thelgamuwa Valley and a sheer drop of 1192 m (4000 ft) to the forest floor below. The panoramic views over the misty valley and distant mountain peaks are truly spectacular, you'll want your camera today!

After the hike, you'll drive to Kandy, passing the gorgeous scenery along the way. Lying in the hills of the Kandy plateau, this city previously served as the last capital of the ancient kings' era of Sri Lanka. The rest of the day is free for your own discoveries – maybe visit the golden roofed Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic. Housed inside, the relic of the tooth of the Buddha has played an important role in local politics due to the belief that whoever holds the relic holds governance of the country. Kandy's temple and its status as the last city of the Sri Lankan Kings have made it a UNESCO World Heritage site.

In the evening visit a Sinhalese home for a cooking demonstration followed by delicious Sri Lankan dinner.

Included Activities

- Knuckles Mini World's End Guided Trek
- Cooking Demo Followed by Dinner at Sinhalese Home

Accommodation

Thilanka Hotel Kandy or similar

Day 6: 20th February 2025

Kandy, Ella

Meals Included: Breakfast

This morning, say goodbye to Kandy and you hop on a train to Ella. This train trip is famous due to the gorgeous views along the way of lush, green scenery and surrounding mountains (so grab a window seat if you can!). It's a long journey, but you can buy all sorts of yummy treats from the onboard sellers.

The rest of the day is free at your own leisure! Maybe visit a local tea factory or go for a drink in one of the many bars. Tonight, your leader can help you with the best spots for nightlife – maybe grab a couple of pals and head to a local restaurant nearby that boasts live music and delicious eats.

Included Activities

- Scenic Train Journey from Kandy – Ella

Accommodation

EKHO Ella or similar

Special information

Your travel time today will be approximately 6 hours.

Train tickets are in very high demand. We always try our best to secure tickets, but on the rare occasion that we cannot book them, you will continue your journey by private vehicle.

Day 7: 21st February 2025

Ella

Meals Included: Breakfast

After a scrumptious breakfast, cycle to Mini Adam's Peak. When you arrive, you'll venture out on a hike to Mini Adam's Peak (Easy). Get active and traverse the green mountainsides for some fresh air! Mini Adam's Peak is known for its stunning views of green tea plantations, rolling hills and misty valleys. At the top you'll be rewarded with panoramic views of the surrounding countryside.

Later, get on board your private vehicle at Mini Adam's Peak and fly over iconic tea estates and lush greenery overlooking the famous Ella Gap. This two-wire zip-line stretches for more than half a kilometer, slides at a maximum speed of 80kmph, and offers a bird's-eye view of the beautiful hills of the island.

Included Activities

- Cycling to Mini Adam's Peak and enjoy the hike
- Flying Ravana Zipline Experience

Accommodation

EKHO Ella or similar

Day 8: 22nd February 2025

Ella, Belihul Oya

Meals Included: Breakfast

Today, enjoy a hike to Pahanthudawa Waterfall. The Pahanthudawa Waterfall is a tributary of the Belihuloya River. It is well-known for its stunning beauty and quiet and peaceful natural setting. The hike to Pahanthudawa Waterfall takes you through a jungle, making it an exciting adventure for experienced hikers.

Upon completing the excursion return to Ella.

Included Activities

- Day Excursion to Belihul Oya – Pahanthudawa (1.5 hour drive each way)

Accommodation

EKHO Ella or similar

Day 9: 23rd February 2025

Ella, Udawalawe

Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

After a hearty breakfast and 8.30 am checkout, drive to Udawalawe National Park (approximately 2.5 hours).

Following lunch, hop in a jeep for a safari inside the park. This park has an amazing array of animal and birdlife, with more herds of wild elephants than anywhere else in Sri Lanka. Other wildlife regularly spotted here includes macaques and larger monkeys, spotted deer, crocodiles and sometimes even leopards. This is a real safari experience, nothing like a zoo or safari park – truly an adventure for all ages!

Check into the campsite at around 6 pm after a full day of adventure.

Included Activities

- Afternoon Wildlife Safari at Udawalawe National Park

Accommodation

Athgira River Camp Udawalawe or similar

Day 10: 24th February 2025

Udawalawe, Mirissa

Meals Included: Breakfast

After a leisurely breakfast it's time to farewell the camp and head to the chilled-out beach town of Mirissa where you will spend the next 2 nights.

Check in to the hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure!

Accommodation

Paradise Beach Club Mirissa or similar

Day 11: 25th February 2025

Udawalawe, Mirissa

Meals Included: Breakfast

Early this morning (around 5.30am) gather to proceed for Whale Watching in Mirissa.

Mirissa is the ideal place for whale and dolphin watching between the months of November to April, as the

waters become a playground for a myriad of whales and dolphin species. Some of the most commonly spotted whales include sperm whales, killer whales, Bryde whales, short, finned whales, while you'll be able to see schools of bottlenose dolphins and striped dolphins as they playfully frolic around your boat!

Return to the hotel and rest of the day at leisure!

Included Activities

- Whale & Dolphin Watching in Mirissa

Accommodation

Paradise Beach Club Mirissa or similar

Day 12: 26th February 2025

Mirissa, Galle

Meals Included: Breakfast

Head further down the coast to Galle – home to an impressive UNESCO World Heritage-listed Dutch fort with extensive walls and many old buildings. The city is a memorable collection of Dutch-colonial buildings with boutique shops and cafes to visit. Walk around the perimeter of the Galle Fort and opt to cool off with an icy ginger drink in a café.

Check-in to your hotel and relax!

Included Activities

- Explore Galle – Dutch Fortress

Accommodation

Heritage Galle Fort Hotel or similar

Day 13: 27th February 2025

Galle, Colombo

Meals Included: Breakfast & Farewell Dinner

Start your day with a short drive to the small town of Unanwitiya – your starting point for an exciting day of kayaking down the Gin River. After instruction from your expert guides, you'll cruise down the clear waters as it winds its way downstream. Paddle past dense forests, sandbanks, tea plantations and rice paddy fields while keeping an eye out for monitor lizards, birds and the occasional troop of monkeys. After kayaking, head to the boathouse for a delicious local lunch and then head to Colombo!

This evening, join your leader and fellow travellers for a final group dinner to see out your Sri Lankan adventure.

Included Activities

- Gin River Kayaking
- Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant

Accommodation

Fairway Colombo Hotel or similar

Day 14: 28th February 2025

Colombo

Meals Included: Breakfast

There are no other activities planned for the day and trip comes to an end in Colombo.

Standard Check out time at the hotel 1200 Hours

Departure Transfer

- Departure transfer included on a group basis

Important Information

Problems and emergency contact information

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or local representative straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader or local representative may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case, please ask the group leader or local representative to speak to their direct manager.

You may also choose to provide details in your online feedback, which we ask you to complete within 30 days of the end of your trip. Please do be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is completed, so informing us while still travelling will give us the opportunity to resolve the issue in real-time.

For general contact details please use the following page: <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/contact/>

If you have booked an arrival transfer, and you experience severe delays at immigration, baggage collection or customs, or if you are not able to find the driver, please contact the transfer operator directly on the number listed in the joining point instructions in the section above.

In case of a genuine crisis or emergency, you can reach our local office on the numbers below:

Intrepid's Local Operator: +94 76 831 6000

Passports, visas and entry requirements

PASSPORT

You'll need a valid passport to travel internationally and most countries require your passport to have a minimum of 6 months validity, so remember to check the expiry date.

We need your passport information to get everything ready for your trip so it's important that the information on your booking matches your passport exactly. Please take care to provide the correct details. We recommend carrying a copy of the photo page of your passport while travelling and leaving a copy at home with family or friends.

VISAS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Many countries require a visa and obtaining the correct visa for your trip and any countries you may transit through is your responsibility. We recommend you check your visa requirements as soon as you have booked your trip. This will ensure you have time to prepare your documents and for your visa application to be processed. You can check the entry requirements for your nationality on your government's foreign travel advisories, consular websites or on our page here: <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/visa-entry-requirements>

Medical and health information

GENERAL HEALTH

All travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully on this trip. For the safety and wellbeing of yourself and others, if you are unwell prior to travelling, please stay at home and contact us to make alternative arrangements.

When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assess your ability to manage and enjoy our style of travel. Please note that if in the assessment of our group leader or local representative a traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the

group, we reserve the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations before departure. We recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements in their original packaging as they may not easily be obtained while travelling. If you are carrying medication, ensure you check your government's foreign travel advice for any local restrictions or requirements

Food and dietary requirements

SRI LANKAN FOOD:

Sri Lankan food is, put simply, delicious! Here's some advice on the best local dishes to try:

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/eat-like-a-local-in-sri-lanka/>

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/best-breakfasts-sri-lanka/>

Vegetarians & vegans also won't go hungry:

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/vegetarian-vegan-food-guide-sri-lanka/>

Money matters

SRI LANKA MONEY

The official currency of Sri Lanka is the Rupee (LKR). You can use your credit/debit card in ATMs, which are common throughout Sri Lanka. Credit/debit cards aren't accepted for small payments so please ensure you have LKR cash to cover daily expenses. Clean banknotes in small denominations are most useful. Major credit cards are accepted in larger shops and restaurants in big cities.

SPENDING MONEY

When it comes to spending money on the trip, every traveller is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do, so please budget an appropriate amount for things like optional meals, drinks, shopping, optional activities, and laundry. Make sure you have read the itinerary and inclusions thoroughly so you know what is included in the trip price and what you may need to pay for while travelling.

TIPPING

If you're happy with the services provided a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many Intrepid destinations. Although it can be difficult to source we advise you to carry small notes of local currency each day to make tipping easier.

The following amounts are per person suggestions based on local considerations and feedback from our past travellers:

Restaurants: Local markets and basic restaurants - round your bill up to the nearest US\$1. More up-market restaurants we suggest 10% to 15% of your bill.

Local guides: Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide in addition to your tour leader. We suggest US\$2-US\$3 per day for local guides.

Drivers: You may have a range of drivers on your trip. Some may be with you for a short journey while others may be with you for several days. We would suggest a higher tip for those more involved with the group, however we suggest \$4-\$5 per person per day for both bus and the staffs.

Your Tour Leader: You may also consider tipping your tour leader for outstanding service throughout your trip. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline US\$5 - US\$6 per person, per day can be used. Of course you are free to tip more or less as you see fit, depending on your perception of service quality and the length of your trip. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service.

In total, we recommend you budget approx US\$13-US\$15 per day of your trip to cover tipping.

At your group meeting on Day 1, your tour leader will discuss with you the idea of running a group tipping kitty, whereby everybody contributes an equal amount and then your group leader pays the tips while keeping a running record of all monies spent (except restaurant tips). The record can be checked at any time and any money remaining at the end of the tour returned to group members. This is often the easiest way to avoid the hassles of needing small change and knowing when and what is an appropriate amount to tip.

Please don't tip with coins, very small denomination notes, or dirty and ripped notes. This is regarded culturally as an insult.

CONTINGENCY FUNDS

We try to plan for every eventuality, but there are still some things beyond our control. We reserve the right to change an itinerary after departure due to local circumstances or a Force Majeure Event. In such emergency circumstances, the additional cost of any necessary itinerary alterations will be covered by you. Please note we are not responsible for any incidental expenses that may be incurred as a result of the change of itineraries including but not limited to visas, vaccinations or non-refundable flights. Make sure you have access to an extra US\$500 for emergencies (e.g. severe weather, natural disasters, civil unrest) or other events that result in unavoidable changes to the itinerary (e.g. transport strikes or cancellations, airport closures). Sometimes these things necessitate last-minute changes to enable our trips to continue to run, and as a result, there may be some extra costs involved. The recommended amount is listed in USD for the relatability of universal travellers, however, local currency may be needed once in the country to cover these costs.

Packing

What you need to bring will vary according to the trip style you have chosen, the countries you are visiting and when you are travelling. Generally speaking, we recommend you pack as lightly as possible and make sure that you are able to carry and lift your own luggage, and walk with it for short distances.

Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags or backpacks with wheels are convenient although we recommend your bag has carry straps. A lockable bag or small padlock is useful.

You'll also need a day pack/bag to carry water, camera, and jacket etc. when you're exploring during the day and for your overnight hike into the tea plantations.

Below are some ideas and helpful tips on what you specifically need for this trip.

ESSENTIALS:

- Lightweight clothing. You will need to bring a mixture of lightweight clothing and warm layers. Long shirts and pants for protection against mosquitoes are useful. Clothes should be easy to wash and dry. Maybe bring a change of smart clothes for dinner in Colombo. Please also bring clothing that covers arms and pants/skirts that go past the knee for entry into local temples. For women, a light scarf is also a good idea for covering shoulders and arms when hot.
- Closed-in shoes will help to protect your feet from cuts and scratches when walking through cities as well as bush/grass-lands, and will also act as a barrier protection in rare cases against bites or stings.
- Sun protection - hat, sunscreen, sunglasses

RECOMMENDED:

- The Hill country of Sri Lanka can be cold, especially on the tea plantation hike. Please bring a light, warm waterproof jacket.
- Hiking boots, socks and light hiking clothing such as synthetic T shirt styles that wick away moisture
- Long hiking pants (as area can be subject to leeches)
- Personal medical kit. A larger kit will be on hand with your leader, but we recommend you carry items such as mild pain killers, electrolytes, Band-Aids and insect repellent.
- Water bottle. We recommend at least a 1.5litre capacity. The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world.
- Camera / phone.

OPTIONAL:

- Ear plugs to guard against street noise, barking dogs and snorers.
- A good book, journal and music player.

LUGGAGE LIMIT:

Please keep your luggage to a minimum. One small soft-sided bag plus a day pack (no more than 15-20kgs in total per person) is essential. We recommend against bringing hard/externally framed suitcases as they are difficult to store and can damage equipment and other travellers' belongings. If your trip is beginning and ending at the same location, excess luggage can usually be stored at your arrival/departure hotel and can be collected after your trip.

VALUABLES:

Please try to avoid bringing unnecessary valuables, and use your hotel safe. It's also a good idea to purchase a money belt or pouch that is easily hidden. We strongly recommend that you photocopy all important documents e.g. air tickets, passport, vaccination certificate, etc. and keep the copies separate from the originals. While not valid, a photocopy makes it very much easier to obtain replacements if necessary.

BATTERIES/POWER:

Most of our trips have access to power to recharge batteries for phones and cameras every day . We recommend that you carry an extra battery for your camera and/or a small portable power bank.

MORE!

If you need some further tips for packing, you can always check out our ultimate packing list.

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/packing-list>

Phone and internet access

Hotels in Sri Lanka generally have excellent WiFi connections. Most hotels offer free WiFi in public areas, with many also offering in room WiFi. Your tour leader will offer you the best advice on communications in remote areas of the country. You can purchase a local SIM card at the airport on arrival. Etisalat and Airtel are two of the bigger operators with the best nationwide coverage.

Safety

Most national governments provide regularly updated foreign travel advice on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all destinations and activities on your trip. Please refer to our website's safety page for links to major travel advisories and updates on safety issues affecting our trips here: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/travel-alerts>

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, flight tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your group leader or local representative will accompany you on all included activities, however, during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests or relax and take it easy. While your group leader or local representative will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your Intrepid itinerary, and Intrepid makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your group leader or local representative has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

Intrepid's operational safety policies can be viewed on our website at the link below. We recommend that you take a moment to read through this information before travelling, and would appreciate any feedback on how safety is being managed on our trips.

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/safety-guidelines>

CURRENT SITUATION:

The recent terrorist attacks were a tragic event and have had a serious impact on tourism in the country. Intrepid has a strong commitment to our local staff and the communities we visit and are continuing to operate all our trips in Sri Lanka. While the security situation is now much more stable, you will still see a high police presence in towns and cities and many check points are still in place. We continue to follow government travel advisories and local authorities in operating our trips in Sri Lanka. We don't anticipate major changes to your itinerary at this time, however it's important to be aware that the country is still recovering and things like travel times between destinations and time taken to go through security at the airport may be affected.

POLITICAL TENSION:

Demonstrations and large public gatherings can turn violent or be a target for politically-motivated attacks. Police have used tear gas and water cannons in response to protests. Curfews can be imposed at short notice. You should avoid all large public gatherings and follow advice of your leader. Some security forces maintain a visible presence, particularly in the northern and eastern provinces. Military and police checkpoints can be established and road closures can occur without warning.

PETTY CRIME:

Pick-pocketing, bag snatching and other petty crime occurs in Sri Lanka, particularly in crowded places such as tourist areas, markets and on public transport. Carry only what you need and always use hotel safes where available. Card skimming has been known to occur - only use ATMs attached to banks or at major hotels. Some tourists unwittingly buy counterfeit goods, particularly jewellery and gems - be aware you may not be buying the real thing.

LOCAL LAWS:

You must carry a form of official photo identification with you at all times - a copy of your passport is a good idea. Be aware that smoking and drinking in most public places is illegal.

WOMEN'S SAFETY:

Women should exercise caution when travelling in Sri Lanka. While the risk of an incident occurring on your trip is very low, below are some things you can do for your safety and peace of mind when travelling:

- Respect local dress codes and customs, perhaps dressing more conservatively than you do at home
- Avoid isolated areas, including beaches, unlit city streets and village lanes when alone at any time of day
- Avoid travelling alone on public transport, or in taxis or auto-rickshaws at night
- If you're being collected at the airport by a driver make sure they have properly identified themselves before you set off.

Community guidelines

Intrepid won't tolerate any kind of violence, harassment (whether physical, verbal or sexual), or disrespect toward fellow travellers, our teams or local communities.

To ensure the wellbeing of everyone on the trip, decisions made by your group leader are final.

Romantic relationships between travellers and group leader or local representative are not permitted while on trip.

Any behaviour that prevents your leader from continuing the itinerary as planned, breaks local laws or opposes any of these guidelines may result in Intrepid denying your booking or removing you from the trip.

If something concerns you during your travels, please speak to your group leader immediately. Alternatively, you can contact us on the emergency contact number detailed in the Problems and Emergency Contact Information section of this Essential Trip Information.

Travelling on a group trip

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and likely a range of age

groups too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part. Due to privacy reasons, we are unable to provide you with contact details and any personal information about your fellow travellers booked on your trip prior to departure.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

The beauty of our style of travel is that it caters to travellers who are travelling solo and who want to meet and share experiences with like-minded people.

On our trips rooming is organised on a twin-share basis. We pair up solo travellers with another traveller of the same gender as per the gender marker on each of their passports.

As a responsible tour operator, we strive to create a safe and inclusive environment for everyone. In the case that your gender identity differs from what is indicated on your passport, please contact us so that we can discuss rooming options with you.

We also have an optional single supplement available on most trips for travellers who prefer to have their own room. Please note that this only applies to accommodation during the tour. Pre-trip and post-trip accommodation booked through us will be on a single room basis.

On a small selection of itineraries some accommodations are booked on an open gender, multi-share basis (for example on a felucca in Egypt or an overnight train in Vietnam). In those instances it will clearly be stated in our Essential Trip Information prior to booking and travelling.

Travel insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all our trips for those travelling internationally. We require that at a minimum you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. If you are travelling within your home country or region please confirm before travel that you are entitled to access the public medical system easily should an accident occur. We strongly recommend all travellers have a policy that also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage or personal effects. For international trips, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24-hour emergency contact number has been sighted by your group leader or local representative.

If you have credit card insurance your group leader or local representative will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number, and emergency contact number rather than the bank's name and your credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

For travellers who reside within the European Union, Switzerland or USA the requirement to purchase travel insurance cannot be compulsory. However the purchase of travel insurance is still highly recommended, and travellers from these regions who decline travel insurance when travelling outside of their home region must sign a Travel Insurance Waiver Form at the Group Meeting, recognizing personal responsibility for emergency medical and repatriation costs should they arise.

For assistance with travel insurance or other services, please visit the link below:

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/booking-resources/our-services>

Responsible travel

Our Responsible Travel Policy outlines our commitment to preserving the environment, supporting local communities, protecting the vulnerable, and giving back to the places we travel. All our trip group leaders or local representatives, suppliers, and staff are trained on these principles and are core to us delivering sustainable, experience-rich travel.

Explore the different parts of our Responsible Travel Policy by visiting:
<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/responsible-travel>

LOCAL DRESS:

When packing be aware that dress standards are conservative throughout Asia, especially outside major cities. To respect this and for your own comfort, we strongly recommend modest clothing. This means clothing that covers your shoulders and knees. Loose, lightweight, long clothing is both respectful and cool in the predominantly hot Asian climate. In many rural areas in Asia women will need to wear modest clothing even to swim. Singlets, tank tops and topless sun bathing are all unacceptable. When visiting religious sites men often need to wear long trousers and women a long skirt or sarong.

BUDDHA IMAGES:

Posing for a photograph next to a statue of Buddha is considered extremely disrespectful or even illegal as is mistreatment of Buddhist images, which can include the wearing of tattoos, jewellery or clothing associated with Buddhism.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/elephants-welfare>

The Intrepid Foundation

We created our not-for-profit, the Intrepid Foundation because you – our travellers – told us you wanted to make an even greater impact in the communities you visit.

The Foundation works by teaming up with partners around the world so that together we can deliver greater positive impact at scale. Partners are identified by our local staff who live and work in our destinations. They harness their powerful community connections to determine the issues that matter most and select local partners who can deliver real solutions.

Since 2002, the Intrepid Foundation has raised more than \$14million dollars and supported more than 160 communities worldwide. Now, with over 40 partners all over the world, your donations are helping to restore forests in Kenya, empower women in Honduras and promote elephant welfare in Laos, to name just a few.

For more information about the Intrepid Foundation, please ask your group leader or local representative or visit our website: <http://www.theintrepidfoundation.org/>

This trip supports Zero Plastic, who aim to reduce plastic waste in Sri Lankan communities through education and volunteer programs. Donations help fund their Team Up To Clean Up project, which raises awareness about the impact of plastic on the environment and local wildlife and reduces plastic pollution at the UNESCO-listed Sigiriya (and surrounding communities). Intrepid will double your impact by dollar-matching post-trip donations made to The Intrepid Foundation. To find out more or make a donation, visit <https://www.theintrepidfoundation.org/t/zero-plastic>