Splendid Island (10 Nights / 11 Days)

Day 1: Airport - Colombo

Arrive at the airport in Katunayake, Colombo and greeted by our dedicated Rejoice Holidays guide. Then, we transfer to the hotel reserved. This afternoon, we depart for our tour of Colombo. Colombo - being the commercial capital of Sri Lanka, has, for many centuries, been a flourishing seaport. The Moors, Portuguese, Dutch and the British have all left their influence in the city, resulting in a curious blend of eastern tradition with western sophistication. We will start by visiting the Colombo Fort which was built by the Portuguese. And then proceed towards Pettah - Colombo's busiest and the most traditional bazaar, which has grown outside the walls of the Fort.

Day 2: Colombo - Anuradhapura - Habarana

After the breakfast at the hotel, we leave to Anuradhapura a UNESCO World Heritage site. Anuradhapura is a hot and dry town and an agriculture district. Anuradhapura is the most extensive and important of all the ancient cities in Sri Lanka. In the ancient times, it was ruled by the Sinhalese Kings for over 1,000 years. We view Buddhist shrines, which belong to the 3rd Century BC, monuments, dagobas and pokunas (ponds); tanks, which were used for storing water and crucial in the successful irrigation of the land. We also visit the Buddhist sacred tree known as "Sri Maha Bodi tree", which is over 2,000 years old. Next, we go to Habarana. Habarana is a small city and a very popular tourist destination for safari lovers, where we will enjoy a fascinating elephant back safari. Over night stay in Habarana at a reserved star class hotel as per your package.

Day 3: Habarana - Hiriwaduna Village - Sigiriya

After breakfast at the hotel, we visit a typical Sri Lankan village to see local people and their rural farming practices. Village life in the country side is always a fascinating and sociable experience here. Village people are always curious about foreign visitors and are keen to have chats with tourists. In the evening, we visit Sigiriya - a 182 metre high rock on which the 5th century ruler Kasyapa built a fortress and palace. Located in a niche in the rocks are the famous frescoes of beautiful women and the highly polished surface of the wall provides a mirror effect. On the summit of the rock, are the ruins of the King’s Palace, bath and terraces could be found. And, at the foot of the rock, are the remains of the pleasure gardens. Sigiriya is a UNESCO World Heritage site too. Over night at the same star class hotel in Habarana.

Day 4: Habarana - Polonnaruwa

Today we travel to Polonnaruwa after breakfast at the hotel. Polonnaruwa is the second most ancient of Sri Lanka's kingdoms and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Polonnaruwa was built in the 12th century by King Parakramabahu and under whose rule the city flourished. The remains of the King’s Palace, which include shrines, temples and dagobas, are well preserved. The Gal Vihara (the Rock Temple) is a "must see" place for the tourists visiting Polonnaruwa. This is a rock temple of the Buddha constructed in the 12th century by the King Parakramabahu. The central feature of the shrine are four images of the Buddha, which have been carved into the face of a large granite rock. These are considered to be some of the best examples of ancient Sinhalese sculpting and carving arts, and have made the Gal Vihara one of the most visited monuments in Polonnaruwa. Known as one of the cleaner and more beautiful cities in the country, Polonnaruwa has an splendid green environment, amazing ancient constructions, Parakrama Samudraya (a huge lake built in 1200 A.D.), attractive tourist hotels and most importantly, nice people with hospitality, always attracts local and foreign tourists. In the evening, we return to the hotel in Habarana.

Day 5: Habarana - Dambulla - Matale - Kandy

After breakfast, we start the day by visiting the "Dambulla Golden Temple" or known as the "Dambulla Cave Temple", which is also a UNESCO World Heritage site. Dambulla is hot and dry in climate. Within the temple, events in the life of the Buddha and Sinhalese people are illustrated in paintings and carvings also found in the rock-side caves. There are more than 80 documented caves in the surrounding. Major attractions are spread over 5 caves. There are a total of 153 Buddha statues and 3 statues of the Sri Lankan kings. Leaving Dambulla, on the way to Kandy, we stop in Matale and visit the famous Spice Garden, where we find oriental-style market stocked with flowers and fruits, together with handicraft centers. As we approach Kandy, spectacular views of the city nestling amidst low hills could be viewed. Kandy, being a UNESCO World Heritage city is looped by the island's longest river, the Mahaweli. We will enjoy the evening in leisure in Kandy and would stay overnight at a reserved star class hotel in the city.

Day 6: Kandy: Royal Botanical Gardens - Pinnawela

Today, after breakfast, we visit the Royal Botanical Gardens in Peradeniya, which is situated in close proximity to the city of Kandy. These gorgeous gardens cover 150 acres, including a 50 acre arboretum of more than 10,000 trees. In 1821, when island was under the British rule, this royal park became a botanical garden and it was here that many crops including coffee, tea, nutmeg and rubber were tested, before later becoming an important part of the country’s economy. The garden is a finest of its kind in Asia and the largest of the botanical gardens in Sri Lanka. It has been also used during the Second World War by Lord Louis Mountbatten, the supreme commander of the allied forces in the South Asia as the headquarters of the South East Asia Command. The evening, visit to the Elephant orphanage. The Elephant sanctuary, about where orphaned and injured elephants, who cannot be released back into the wild, are lovingly cared for. The elephant orphanage is a place you will really enjoy and remember forever in your life time. Most orphans are accustomed to the visitors and are harmless. Night stay at the hotel in Kandy.

Day 7: Kandy - Nuwara Eliya

This morning, after finishing breakfast, we visit the Dalada Maligawa (The Temple of the Tooth Relic) - a world renowned Buddhist temple in the city. Kandy has been declared as a World Heritage city by the UNESCO, partially due to this temple. It is located in the royal palace complex which houses the Relic of the tooth of Buddha. Since ancient times, the relic has played an important role in local politics as it was believed that whoever holds the relic, would hold the governance of the country. The architecture and the structure of the buildings such as of the Royal Palace, are of superior quality and famous among the visitors. This temple is of course, a "must see" in the island. After the lunch, in the evening, we start our journey towards Nuwara Eliya - the most beautiful place in the central highlands of Sri Lanka. Over night stay in a reserved star hotel.

Day 8: Nuwara Eliya - Elephant Transit Home -Yala

Today, after breakfast, we leave to the city of Nuwara Eliay, exploring around the town and beautiful places. Nuwara Eliya has a salubrious climate with beautiful places to enjoy your time, and is known as "Little England". The city is absolutely fantastic with breathtaking views of valleys, meadows, mountains and full of greenery surrounding. Some of the world's finest teas are grown on these verdant hillsides where colorfully dressed tea-workers could be found dotted among the greenery looking plantations, where as a labor of love, they pick the delicate leaves by hand. We, at Rejoice Holidays, will be guiding you to have the opportunity to sample or purchase such finest products. Later in the evening, we continue to "Udawalawe" and the Elephant Transit Home, sponsored by the Born Free Trust. Unlike many other sanctuaries, this home rehabilitates orphaned and injured elephants until they become strong and old enough to be released back into the wild. Night stay at a star hotel in Yala Village.

Day 9: Yala National Park

An early start this morning, we leave to Yala National park for our safari into the island’s best known national park. The open undulating terrain makes it ideal for elephant spotting, and the shrubbery and rock strewn hillocks are where you may see one of the elusive Sri Lankan Leopards. This would be such a fascinating jeep safari, which you may remember forever. Following our return to the hotel, the remainder of the day is free for you to enjoy the relaxing surroundings, with an opportunity to join in an optional evening bird trail with an expert guide. Over night at the hotel in Yala.

Day 10: Yala - Galle - Colombo

Today, we leave from Yala to Colombo, via Galle, a city situated on the south-western tip of Sri Lanka. Before the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century, Galle (then Known as Gimhathiththa) was the main port on the island. Galle reached the height of its development in the 18th century, during the Dutch colonial period. Old Town of Galle and its fortifications

are declared as one of the UNESCO World Heritage sites. The International cricket stadium is another famous mark of Galle. Following our tour of this city, we continue onwards to Colombo for an overnight stay at the reserved star hotel.

Day 11: Colombo - Airport

After completing break-fast at the hotel, if the time permits, we go for some shopping in the Colombo city which is a paradise for bargain shopping. After shopping, we transfer to the airport to leave the island of glory, with full appreciation of what delights Sri Lanka could offer you next time ...