

South India & Sri Lanka: Game Drives, Temples & Tropical Coasts

Pre-departure information for your tour



Passport, Visa & Entry Requirements

- To enter India and Sri Lanka, U.S. and Canadian citizens need a valid passport with an expiration date extending at least six months beyond their return date. We recommend having at least two blank passport pages for entry stamps.
- U.S. and Canadian passport holders must also obtain a visa prior to their tour. You may [apply for an eVisa yourself](#) or use a third-party provider, such as our partner company, [VisaCentral](#). Regardless of your choice, you'll have to pay to receive an Indian visa.
- U.S. and Canadian passport holders must purchase an individual visa from the Sri Lankan government's Electronic Travel Authority website eta.gov.lk/slvisa prior to departure.
- If you're not a U.S. or Canadian citizen, you must contact the Indian consulate for specific entry requirements.
- You can see the most up-to-date entry requirements for the destination(s) you'll visit on tour by going to goaheadtours.com/entry-requirements and searching the code LAK.

Arrival & Departure Information

- Round-trip flights booked through Go Ahead Tours arrive in Chennai and depart from Colombo.
- When you arrive in Chennai, a Go Ahead representative will be waiting for you in the arrivals hall with either a Go Ahead sign or one bearing your name. If you don't see them immediately, please be patient and stay in the arrivals area. They may be assisting another traveler and will be back shortly.
- Transfers to and from the airport at your destination are included for travelers who purchase their flights through Go Ahead Tours. Travelers who purchase their own flights, and who'll arrive and depart from the same airports on the same travel days as their fellow group members, may request transfers with Go Ahead Tours for an additional cost.

On-Tour Transportation

- This tour utilizes various modes of transportation, including planes, rickshaws, tuk-tuks, and 4x4 land cruisers (plus a train on the tour extension). To board some of them, you may have to climb raised platforms or steps: For instance, the 4x4 land cruisers used on the game drives have high steps. Often, there won't be access to ramps or lifts. Additionally, you may have to stoop to get into and out of your seat on boats.
- Your game drives will be long and may cross bumpy terrain, so we recommend bringing a small pillow to ease the ride and the impact it may have on your body.
- Flights from Chennai to Madurai and Kochi to Colombo are included in the price of your tour. The tour extension also includes a train ride from Nanu Oya to Ella.
- All other included transportation on this tour is by private motor coach.

Baggage Allowance & Expectations

- Please note that our travelers are limited to one checked bag each due to storage limitations on motor coaches and other transfers.
- Some airlines may impose additional charges if you exceed baggage size and weight restrictions. Be advised that you're responsible for any baggage fees incurred.
- Contact your airline(s) for the baggage size and weight restrictions on your flights. Please note that the flights included on the tour may have baggage restrictions as low as 33lbs for checked bags and 15lbs for carry-on bags. You will be responsible for any costs associated with overweight baggage.
- Make sure you label your baggage and keep valuables, medication, and documents in your carry-on bag.
- Travelers must be able to manage their luggage throughout tour; porters aren't guaranteed at hotels, airports, or train stations.

Clothing & Packing Tips

- We recommend packing lightweight, loose-

fitting clothing that can be easily layered to accommodate varying temperatures, as well as a light jacket or rainwear.

- A sturdy pair of walking shoes or sneakers is recommended for sightseeing.
- You may want to pack dressier attire if you plan to visit a high-end restaurant or attend a special performance.
- It's preferable not to visit temples or other holy places with bare legs or shoulders; entrance may be denied on this basis. And remember: You must remove your shoes at all Hindu and Buddhist religious sites.
- Waterproof shoes or sandals, a swimsuit, sunscreen, and insect repellent are recommended for outdoor activities. Binoculars are also handy for taking a closer look at local wildlife and scenery.
- We recommend packing a universal adapter, as well as a voltage converter if you plan on using your own hairdryer or other device without a built-in converter.
- In case of emergencies, we also recommend packing your medical insurance card in your carry-on.

Meals & Cuisine

- This tour includes seven lunches and eight dinners: They may be set, plated set menus; buffets; or family-style meals, depending on the location. Dinners also include one glass of beer, wine, or a soft drink, as well as water, coffee, and tea.
- A hotel breakfast is included each morning, and is typically a buffet-style meal with hot and cold options.
- While meat-free options abound in the country, the southern regions of India are often lighter with a focus on a rice-based diet using coveted spices like curry leaves, tamarind, coconut, and chiles which are often combined to create a vibrant marriage of flavors. You'll find spicier dishes in the south make use of the many spices found in the area, but you'll also find plenty of milder meals as well.
- Meals are usually served with rice or a variety of breads—such as unleavened roti, deep-fried puri, and famous, flat naan.
- Sri Lankan cuisine draws inspiration from nearby India and the colonial powers that

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formerly controlled the country. Spices are prevalent in almost every type of food and a simple, yet flavorful dish of rice and curry can be found almost everywhere. Since the country is an island, cuisine that incorporates fish and coconut is also popular.

Tipping

- At the conclusion of your tour, it's customary to offer your Tour Director and driver a gratuity in local currency. Please keep current exchange rates in mind.
- We recommend tipping the equivalent of \$10–\$12USD per person, per day for your Tour Director and the equivalent of \$3USD per person, per day for your driver.
- If applicable, we also recommend the equivalent of \$2USD per local guide.
- Tips can only be paid in cash.
- The cost of portage is included in your tour price; it isn't necessary to tip baggage handlers.

Currency

- You'll use the Indian rupee in India and the Sri Lankan rupee in Sri Lanka.
- Better rates of exchange are usually available overseas—though you may want to order some currency from your local bank or a retailer, such as [Travelex](#), before you arrive.
- Travelers may bring up to 25,000 rupees with them when entering the country through an airport. Travelers may also take up to 25,000 rupees out of the country, unless they're continuing to Bhutan or Nepal.
- If you wish, you can get rupees at a currency exchange booth at your arrival airport. Keep a receipt of your transaction.
- Cash is the preferred method of payment across India. Some larger vendors may accept international debit and credit cards, such as Mastercard and Visa. This, however, is uncommon, and minimum purchases are generally required on card-based transactions.
- Plan ahead and bring cash to tip your Tour Director, bus driver, and local guides.

Responsible Travel

- When you travel with Go Ahead Tours, you'll

make a positive impact on the places you visit and the people and animals you meet along the way. That's because our three core Responsible Travel commitments—protecting the environment, supporting local communities, and promoting animal welfare—are at the heart of every tour we offer.

- Travel, when done responsibly, can have an enormous socioeconomic impact on communities. To maximize your impact, eat at locally owned restaurants and shop at small businesses. Ask your Tour Director to point out restaurants they recommend.
- Prepare for your trip: Be aware of monetary norms such as tipping and negotiating in a market; learn about the destination's forms of etiquette; and take some time to learn a few words in the local language.
- When interacting with locals, make sure to ask people for permission before you take their picture, and approach cultural differences with empathy and an open mind.
- Go Ahead Tours encourages travelers to limit their waste while on the road, especially single-use plastics. You can cut back on generating plastic waste by packing your own toiletries, using electronic documents, and bringing a reusable water bottle and shopping bag. If you need to use plastics or paper, please recycle.
- When visiting national parks, reserves, or other protected areas, please do not remove anything from the natural environment or leave any litter. Carry out what you carried in.
- When you come across wild animals on tour, take the philosophies of World Animal Protection to heart: Don't touch or feed them, and maintain a respectful distance. The animals you encounter on your trip should be able to exhibit natural forms of behavior.
- Furthermore, avoid buying exploitative animal products, like crafts made from tortoiseshell or meals such as shark fin soup.
- If you feel we aren't meeting any of these commitments, please let us know.