

Fact Sheet – Sri Lanka



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Introduction



Sri Lanka is a land like no other with its incomparable beauty and a magnificence. Known as the lustrous pearl of the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka is only a small beautiful island right below the massive Indian subcontinent. It was in the twelfth century when the great explorer Marco Polo crossed Sri Lanka while on his long expedition wrote in his journal that Sri Lanka is indeed the finest island in the whole wide world.

The compact island, only 65,610 sq. km in area offers an unparalleled tourism experience. While it is easy for the tourists to travel the width and the breadth of this small island dense with numerous delicacies, it is considered one of the most authentic travel destinations in the world with incomparable diversity of the tourism product.

Sri Lanka has proudly remained a major tourist attraction for centuries particularly attracting the tourists from the European countries.

Touring Sri Lanka would be an enticing experience with richly diverse sights and sensations all captured within such a tiny tropical world. The golden beaches, the enchanting ruins, finest resorts and hotels, colorful festivals and dense wildlife are among the heart-throbbing enchantments that would capture a tourer's heart.

Geography of Sri Lanka



| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Land Area | 65,610 km ² |
| Total Area | 65,610 km ² |
| Population | 20,277,597 (2012) |
| Population Density | 323 /km ² |
| Government Type | Democratic Socialist Republic |
| GDP (PPP) | \$88.23 billion (2017) |
| GDP Per Capita | \$13,397 |
| Currency | Rupee (LKR) |

Types of Accommodation

The tourism industry is an ever-growing industry in the country. Sri Lanka continues to attract foreign investors and tourists to the island ever since independence was gained from the British in 1947. Many stunning resorts and hotels have opened over the years. Several tourist establishments in the country offer visitors a unique and unforgettable experience incorporating the diverse culture of the country. Sri Lanka has a variety of accommodation in all price ranges, varying from basic beachside shacks to elegant colonial mansions and luxurious five-star resorts.

Hotels: are located all over the island, most of the time offering full board accommodation to visitors.

Guesthouses: provide ideal accommodation facilities for mid to low market segments with a blend of the local life.

Heritage Homes: are old residencies and thematic bungalows that were built at least 30 to 40 years ago. These types of accommodations generally have a Colonial or Aesthetic architecture

Airports

International Airports

There are two main international airports in Sri Lanka –

Bandaranaike International Airport

Bandaranaike International Airport, colloquially known as Katunayake Airport and Colombo International Airport. It is the main international airport serving Sri Lanka. It was named after the former Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. It is in the suburb of Negombo. It serves as the hub of SriLankan Airlines, the national carrier of Sri Lanka.

Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport

Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport, generally known as Mattala International Airport is an international airport serving southeast Sri Lanka. It is the first greenfield airport and the only other international airport in the country. It was opened in March of 2013. However, as of June 2018 there are no scheduled flights from the airport.

Apart from the international airports there are domestic airports in different parts of the country.

Domestic Airports

1. Ratmalana Airport (RML)
2. Ampara Airport (ADP)
3. Anuradhapura Airport (ACJ)
4. Batticaloa Airport (BTC)
5. Sigiriya Airport (GIU)
6. Koggala Airport (KCT)
7. Weerawila Airport (WRZ)
8. Jaffna Airport (JAF)
9. Katukurunda Airport (KTY)
10. Iranamadu Airport
11. China Bay Airport (TRR)
12. Vavuniya Airport

Helpful Tips

What to wear

- In Sri Lanka's heat the most practical and comfortable option of clothing is loose fitting, light cotton wear is ideal.
- However, if you're heading to the hilly region where the temperature is much colder, warm clothes are recommended to keep the cold away.
- When visiting sacred sites and shrines, both men and women need to be properly attired
 - Women travelers will need to cover their shoulders and legs, so it is good to always carry a light scarf and a sarong at hand to wear when necessary.
 - Men should also note that long shorts or trousers paired with t-shirts or shirts would be the preferred option at these sites.
 - Sandals or flip-flops are much more comfortable than shoes and when visiting temples or shrines they are much easier to remove.
- Nudity is not allowed anywhere in the island, including the beach. Topless sunbathing is also prohibited.

Climate & Weather

- Sri Lanka has a tropical climate with two distinct seasons as it is in proximity to the equator. The temperature fluctuates between 27°C and 34°C.
- The Asiatic Monsoon greatly affects the tropical climate of the island by reversing the wind direction.
- Most of the island's rainfall is received from the monsoon winds. Between May and July, the south west monsoon winds bring rainfall to the western, central and southern parts of Sri Lanka. Again, in December and January, most of the rainfall occurs in the northern and eastern part of the island which is brought by the north east monsoon winds
- Since the two monsoons arrive at different times of the year, good weather prevails depending on the location throughout the year in Sri Lanka. Hence, there is no off season in the country.

Safety

- Theft
 - In crowded areas always be aware of your surrounding as well as your personal possessions.
 - It is always a good idea to deposit your valuables in the safes of your hotel room.

- Always make sure to keep a copy of all your bank card details and passport information along with any phone numbers needed, just in case you lose them.
- For any emergency situations you could contact 119 for assistance.
- Hassles
 - If you are ever traveling in a tuk-tuk, always make sure to negotiate the fare beforehand
 - When making a purchase ensure to double check the goods or shop at reputed establishments
- Other advice
 - Sri Lanka is a developing country; road rules and safety are improving hence take care when using the roads. Sri Lankans drive on the left
 - Sri Lanka is a tropical country hence always carry sunscreen and insect repellent
 - Currents can be strong sometimes and beaches may have dangerous shelving into deep waters, always ask advice from locals before venturing in the water

Visa

There are 04 types of Sri Lankan visas under which foreigners can legally enter the country. Each visa contains information about the period and the conditions of stay

- The **Visit Visa** permits foreign nationals to enter the country. The Visit Visa is divided into two categories – the Tourist Visit Visa & the Business Visit Visa.
 - The Tourist Visit Visa is issued for a short period of time and is given to those tourists who wish to visit Sri Lanka for travel purposes or for relaxation.
 - The Business Visit Visa is issued for either single, double or multiple entries into Sri Lanka and is given to those to wish to engage in business activities
- The **Residence Visa** allows foreigners to obtain residence in the country if they fulfill certain special criteria.
- The **Transit Visa** is issued for foreign nationals to enter the country for a short period of time when they are en-route to another destination
- The **Gratis Visa** is only granted to holders of a Diplomatic or Official Passport

Other

- It is recommended to change currency at reputed banks and currency exchange centers. You driver will be able to assist you.
- It is recommended to have meals at reputed restaurants. It is best to avoid eating from local eateries if you have a sensitive stomach. Please consult with your driver. Also beware, Sri Lankan food is spicy but tasty
- Tips are purely up to your choice and is not compulsory. It is purely based on the satisfaction of service provided. In general tipping for waiters, bell boys, porters etc., is between US \$ 1-2. Tips for driver are in general US \$ 8-10 a day per couple/family, which can be offered at the end of the tour as a cumulative amount.