



FLY and BiKE  
internationaal gezelschap

## Sri Lanka Spice Trails

Sri Lanka conjures up images of tea plantations, cool highlands, ancient cities and tropical beaches, all of which we'll see on this diverse bicycle tour. Not to be forgotten are the extraordinary flora and fauna, the religious and cultural beliefs or the tantalizing spices that contribute to making the local cuisine so delicious. With such an astonishing variety of cultural and natural treasures there is truly something for everybody on this tour.

**14 Days/13 Nights**  
**Departure Dates:**

**2010**

**3 Jan -16 Jan**  
**28 Feb – 13 March**  
**4 April -17 April**  
**4 July – 17 July**  
**24 Oct – 6 Nov**  
**14 Dec - 1 Jan**

If these dates don't suit your travel schedule, please

**contact us** to talk about operating a private tour or customizing a tour for you or your group.



The quiet back roads of this tear-drop shaped island make it ideal for cycling. We start along the west coast catching glimpses of the sails of the local fishing boats, before we cycle inland through a multitude of Buddhist and Hindu monuments. Ceylon, as Sri Lanka was once known, has been influenced by ancient dynasties, Indians, Portuguese, Dutch and British, all leaving their imprints and a resulting curious mix of ancient cities, monuments and atmospheric colonial architecture to explore.

### Prices

**USD 1950 Tour**  
**USD 195 Fiets**

**€ 375 Single Supplement**

**De prijzen in Euro vindt u op de website [www.flyandbike.be](http://www.flyandbike.be)**

### Group Size

**Limited to 12 people**

We continue to the rock fortress of Sigiriya and the once medieval capital of Polonnaruwa. Here we put the bikes aside for an afternoon and take a wildlife safari in the Wasgomuwa National Park. We take a rest day at the hill town of Kandy so you have time to view the Temple of the Tooth, relax on the lake or walk through the splendid botanical gardens. We then follow rivers flowing down to the south coast and the fortress of Galle.

We overnight in a wonderful range of accommodation, from spa resorts to colonial bungalows on tea estates to remote rustic lodges to the architecturally wonder designed by the famous Geoffrey Bawa.

Be captivated by the romance, color and spice of Sri Lanka, a truly remarkable destination that you'll never forget!

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## Trip Profile

Our bicycle journey will be on quiet back roads, estate tracks and gravel paths. We cover 770 kilometers in 10 cycling days, and much, if not most, of the terrain is undulating and there are some days with more than 100 km of riding. When you combine the great variety of cycling with the cultural and natural attractions, there is plenty to delve into and enjoy.

**Biking Conditions:** The road surfaces are mixed: most days we ride on reasonably good quality asphalt roads, but there are enough sections on very badly broken or dirt tracks that you will need a mountain bike, and preferably one with front shocks. However, there is nothing technical involved on this tour and anyone, assuming they have a reasonable level of fitness, will be able to join. A support truck is always available to help.

**Suitability:** This ride is for those who have some biking experience as well as experts. The beginning of this ride is relatively flat, but there will be hills as we head inland and there are some long distances to cover. Never underestimate the heat and humidity of tropical Sri Lanka, as it will likely ensure things feel hot. This is a true journey through the finest terrain and scenery of Sri Lanka, with the best culture, nature and wildlife thrown in along the way, ensuring you get the very best of everything from your cycling efforts.

### Biking Difficulty



(out of five)

**Good quality tarmac or dirt roads with some long days. No technical experience required.**

## Day to Day

**B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner**

### Day 1 - Arrival in Sri Lanka

Arrive in Sri Lanka and then transfer 20 minutes to the hotel at Negombo beach. You'll have time to prepare your bikes for the journey ahead and then meet for a trip briefing and welcome dinner.

**Jet Wing Seashell. D**

### Day 2 - Negombo – Dambulla

After breakfast we start riding directly from the hotel along the old coast road. Keeping the sea on our left we pass the distinctive patchwork sails of the Karavas fishing community. Their boats pulled up along the beach or sailing just off the coast make for excellent photos. Leaving the coast road heading inland these quiet back roads give you a flavor of Sri Lanka as does our picnic lunch stop under coconut trees with tasty prawn curry and fresh pineapples from the local plantations. After lunch we'll transfer to avoid the heat of the day as we head to Dambulla to visit a 2<sup>nd</sup> century Buddhist cave temple. Also known as the Golden Temple, it is the largest and best-preserved cave temple complex in the country and contains more than 150 Buddha statues. We'll get back on the bikes after we have taken in the views from the caves and ride to our peaceful hotel situated amongst mango trees and paddy fields.

**Thilanka Spa and Resort. Ride 85 km. B L D**

### Day 3 – Dambulla Loop

We'll ride through the countryside, passing orchards, paddy fields and elephant grass to the ancient 5<sup>th</sup> century rock fortress Sigiriya (Lion Rock). We'll park the bikes and walk through the old water gardens before climbing 300m to the view the ruins of King Kasyapa's summer place on the summit.



### Cycling Distance

**770 kilometers**

### Cycling Days

**9 full, 1 half**

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To distract us from the walk up we'll pass the impressive frescos that depict more than 500 ladies. After our descent we'll head to a local hotel and enjoy a refreshing swim before lunch. Our afternoon ride follows an old irrigation canal and we'll see lots of chili plants on our way back to Dambulla.

**Thilanka Spa and Resort. Ride 64 km. B L**

#### **Day 4 – Dambulla - Polonnaruwa**

Riding from the hotel we have a bit of an ascent over the Kaladuwa Hills (400m). We'll be riding in part of a forest reserve en route to Girtale Tank, one of the earliest manmade lakes in Sri Lanka, and our scenic lunch spot. In the afternoon we'll have a nice and flat ride along one of the Girtale irrigation canals to Polonnaruwa, the 10<sup>th</sup> Century capital and best preserved of the ancient cities. Abandoned in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, it was rediscovered in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Brahmanic monuments built by the Cholas, the chiseled stone monuments show us the glory of the ancient Rajarata Kingdom. We overnight at an eco-friendly hotel on the banks of the reservoir.

**Deer Park. Ride 60 km. B L D**

#### **Day 5 - Polonnaruwa - Wasgomuwa**

After a filling breakfast we'll cycle out of Polonnaruwa and ride along the eastern fringes of Wasgomuwa National Park, home to a large population of Sri Lankan elephants and many other mammals -- including sloth bears, leopards, deer, wild buffalo -- and more than 100 bird species. The afternoon we swap our two wheels for the four wheels of jeeps take a safari inside the park.

**Willy's Safari Hotel. Ride 75 km. B L D**

#### **Day 6 – Wasgomuwa - Kandy**

Today we climb up to the Laggala pass at 1000 m and what is often described as the most stunning road in Sri Lanka. Our ride takes us through the Knuckles wilderness before descending on the so-called spice road to Matale, the spice center of Sri Lanka. We transfer the last part into Kandy, Sri Lanka's second largest city, to avoid busy roads.

**Thilanka Hotel Kandy. Ride 77 km. B L D**

#### **Day 7 – Kandy**

Nestled among hills and centered around a lake, picturesque Kandy has long been an important religious center of the Sinhalese and a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists. Today you can explore the town center's old shops, antique and gem specialists or the bustling market. A must do is to see the UNESCO World Heritage site of Sacred Kandy which houses the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic - Sri Lanka's most important Buddhist relic, a tooth of the Buddha.

**Thilanka Hotel Kandy. B**

#### **Day 8 – Kandy - Kotagala**

After a day of rest your legs will be ready for today's tough and long day. We ride on minor estate roads through undulating countryside, passing by small Tamil communities, colorful Hindu temples, scared tree shrines and lots of tea plantations. We stop at the Melfort tea factory to take a tour and learn how about the tea making process. After a lunch, accompanied by a cup of the finest local tea, we descend into Kotmale valley. Here we'll be surrounded by terraced paddy fields and ride along a rock escarpment.

- **We have carefully chosen accommodation that is the best available for the location and offer a good mix, from home stays to luxurious lodges, on our tours.**

- **We love Asian cuisine, well-known for being hot and spicy and for its use of fresh ingredients, and will make sure you get to sample lots of it.**

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To leave this valley it's a long climb up a steep mountain road, but there's always the support vehicle to hop into if you tire. We overnight at an old colonial bungalow at Stonycliff Tea Estate, famous for Dimbula Tea.

**Rosita Bungalow. Ride 102 km. B L D**

#### **Day 9 - Kotagala - Bogowantalawa**

Today's ride will be along gravel roads and tea estate tracks, through the heart of Sri Lanka's tea growing region. You'll be greeted by the pickers at work and their children as we head towards a tea planters retreat. We have to time to enjoy our remote and cozy log cabins in the heart of the Peak wilderness. Though basic, our accommodation does have the benefit of offering a waterfall and rock swimming pools to relax in after a great days ride. If you need more adventure, you can opt for a late afternoon climb to Adams Peak, to watch the sunset. This is about a 90 minute drive away and you'll return late in the evening.

**North Cove Log Cabins. Ride 60 km. B L D**

#### **Day 10 - Bogowantalawa - Suriyakanda**

We descend out of tea country today, down a paved switchback road to the rolling hills of Balangoda and the jungle covered slopes of the Sinharaja rainforest. The landscape changes to fruit and vegetable plantations, and we'll see plenty of the local produce at our lunch stop in a market town. There'll be time to wander around the bazaar and try out your bargaining skills. Our afternoon ride through rubber and Jack fruit plantations takes us to the rustic stone bungalow of a former English tea planter and our overnight stop. The views from the bungalow to the Sinharaja rain forest are divine, as is the food prepared by the resident chef.

**Aigburth Bungalow. Ride 85 km. B L D**

#### **Day 11 - Suriyakanda – Galle**

Today is an epic day of 120 km, but we will be losing altitude as we head from the highlands down to the shore. We stick to quiet back roads along the edge of the Sinharaja rainforest and follow the Nilwala river as it tumbles out of the hills towards the coast. The Sinharaja forest is the country's last viable area of primary tropical rainforest and is home to more than 50% of Sri Lanka's endemic species of mammals and butterflies, as well as many kinds of birds, insects, reptiles and rare amphibians. We'll have a picnic lunch and fruit stop en route before continuing down to the historic port of Galle (pronounced Gaul) and our hotel designed by the famous Geoffrey Bawa. Known for his tropical modernism style, Bawa's Lighthouse is one of his earliest works and the luxury hotel harmonises with the natural beauty of its splendid surroundings.

**Lighthouse Galle. Ride 120 km. B L D**

#### **Day 12 – Galle**

Take break from the bike today and wander through the fortified old city of Galle on your own. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Galle offers a unique blend of European architectural styles and south Asian traditions. Stroll on the walls of the largest remaining fortress in Asia built by European occupiers, and enjoy the ocean views.

**Lighthouse Galle. B**

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### Day 13 – Galle - Colombo

After breakfast we get back on our bikes for our last ride of the tour. We cycle along some quiet inland roads heading north towards Colombo. A beach restaurant will be our lunch stop and then it's time pack up the bikes and drive to Colombo for our final night and farewell dinner at the Gallery Café.

**Galle Face Hotel. Ride 42 km. B L D**

### Day 14 - Colombo – Onward travel

Free time until transfer to airport.

**B**

## Nuts & Bolts

**Bikes:** Rental bikes included. The bikes are Specialized Hard Rock mountain bikes with lightweight alloy frames, 24- to 27-speed gearing, v-brakes and front suspension.

**Safety:** Wearing a helmet is strongly recommended on all our biking adventures and if you choose not to wear one you will be asked to sign a liability waiver. Your tour leader is trained in first aid and emergency rescue, but to a large degree you must be responsible for your own safety while riding. It is therefore compulsory that you take out travel insurance that will cover you for a mountain biking tour.

**Support:** We will be supported by an air-conditioned vehicle that has been specially modified for cycle tours. The vehicles follow us the whole time, and it is very easy to get bikes on and off, so you can rest when you are tired and cycle whenever you feel like it.

**Guides:** You will be led by a local English-speaking tour leader and if the group is 8 people or more we will add another leader to the tour. All our tour leaders are well informed in the history, culture and religions of the area where you are biking and are skilled at passing that knowledge on to you. Your tour leader is also medically trained and an experienced mechanic, able to handle most minor repairs en route.

### Subject to Change

In remote destinations abnormal conditions can prevail at any time, and all adventurous holidays can therefore be subject to unexpected change and we will do our best to adhere to the original itinerary and cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible when necessary.

## The Nitty Gritty

**Arriving and Departing:** This tour starts and ends in Colombo, Sri Lanka. International flights to and from there are not included in the tour price. Please contact us for advice before arranging flights for the best arrival and departure times.

**Passports and Visas:** Europeans, Australians and North Americans receive a tourist visa upon entry, valid for 30 days. If you don't fall into those categories, please check for the latest updates on rules here: [www.immigration.gov.lk](http://www.immigration.gov.lk). Please ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months from date of entry.

**Health:** We recommend that you visit a travel medical doctor and ask about the following vaccinations: typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis A. A certificate for Yellow Fever is required when arriving from an infected area within six days.

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**Weather:** Sri Lanka has a tropical climate, with distinct dry and wet seasons. The seasons are slightly complicated by having two monsoons. From May to August the Yala monsoon brings rain to the island's southwestern half and the Maha monsoon blows from October to January, bringing rain to the North and East. There is also an inter-monsoonal period in October and November when rain can occur in many parts of the island. Average temperatures for Colombo and the low-lying coastal regions are 27°C while at the higher altitudes like Kandy (500m), the average temperature is 20°C. A gortex rain jacket and a warm jumper for the central highlands are suggested clothing.

**Food:** Meals are included as per the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner. Most meals are local and feature rice and curries. Sri Lankan curries come in many varieties of colors and flavors and can be meat- or fish- based dishes, but there are also vegetable and even fruit curries. Many of the spices used have ayurvedic value when used in curries. Any special dietary requirements can also be catered for as well. Please let us know at the time of booking.

**Drink:** Keeping you completely hydrated is a job we take very seriously. Cold water, some energy-restoring local fruit and soft drinks are included in the tour price. Beer is freely available everywhere, but is NOT included in the price.

**Extra Expenses:** We recommend that you tuck away a few extra dollars, perhaps US\$10 a day for incidentals.

**Money:** The Sri Lankan currency is the rupee (Rs). ATMs have spread to all of the cities and major regional centers of Sri Lanka with Commercial Bank having the largest network of ATMs accepting international Visa, MasterCard and Cirrus/Maestro cards. Any bank or exchange bureau will change major currencies into cash, including US dollars, euros and pounds sterling. To get the best rates, change rupees back into hard currency before you leave the country.

*The information in this document is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Where differences exist in the information between this and previous information, this document is the correct version and supersedes the brochure or website.*

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