



Nature, cultural and historical tours



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Cover photograph: Anchored catamarans, Negombo © Shehani Peris



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We are delighted to welcome you to a Jetwing Hotel with a resident naturalist. We hope you will find something of interest in the enclosed programme of excursions – ranging from cultural and historical visits and walks, to natural history tours. Some of our excursions are designed to involve the local community as much as possible for two reasons. Firstly, because we recognise them as important stakeholders who should share in the financial benefits of tourism. Secondly, we believe it is important that the local community play a lead role in the conservation of our cultural and natural heritage.

Resident naturalists are employed at Jetwing Hotels with several objectives in mind. The first is that they are available to educate the guests of the hotel about the natural environment and the culture found in and around the hotel.

The second is that they are a part of a wider strategy to demonstrate that Jetwing Hotels is committed to practising responsible tourism and minimising the impact of its activities on the environment.

Sri Lanka offers a visitor a range of destinations from golden beaches, majestic mountains, dense rainforests, mysterious mangroves and stunning vistas, to ancient ruins and a diversity of religions and cultures. Yet, a thrust for economic development, including in the tourism sector, is destroying the very golden goose that lays the egg: the natural environment. Sri Lanka may be blessed with a great diversity of species and ecosystems but it is also besieged with a range of human-induced threats that affect the survival of these species and ecosystems. Tourism can place heavy, additional stresses on an environment already seriously over-used and over-stretched.

Jetwing Hotels integrate best practices for environmental management and play a significant role in creating environmental awareness, facilitating research and conservation. Jetwing is committed to sustainable tourism. Each Jetwing Hotel has a 'Green Directory' listing the activities it undertakes, in order to be an environmentally responsible hotel. These are available on the Jetwing website, on each hotel's home page.

Jetwing Hotels, together with Jetwing Eco Holidays (the wildlife and luxury travel subsidiary), are also engaged in a campaign to impart information about the island's fauna and flora to the local communities – especially to our school children. To this end, we have published a number of low-cost leaflets, booklets and posters. In order to make this information freely available, these publications have also been serialised in local newspapers. Jetwing naturalists also encourage school groups to join them on field trips and in classroom activities to stimulate further interest in conservation amongst school children.

We hope you will enjoy your stay with us and carry the message of sustainable tourism to others.



Annaiwilundawa Sanctuary

Annaiwilundawa, declared a sanctuary in 1997, is a set of seven cascading ancient irrigation reservoirs, built by King Parakramabahu the Great, in 1140 AD. Each reservoir is between 12-50 hectares and less than four metres deep, but they collectively help to irrigate more than 400 hectares of paddy lands. In addition, these reservoirs provide an ideal wetland habitat for a multitude of water birds. Because of this, Annaiwilundawa has been designated a Ramsar site – that is, a wetland of International Significance.

Take a gentle walk to see a great variety of birds – especially water birds, both resident and migratory. A total of more than 130 bird species and 20,000 individuals have been recorded here. Waterfowl found here include the Little Grebe, Lesser Whistling Duck and the Cotton Teal; migrants include the Sand-piper, Pintail, Garganey, Common and Pintail Snipe. Asian Open-bill and Little Cormorants are common. The area is also a good habitat for butterflies such as Common and Plain Tigers, Lemon Pansy, the Joker, Crimson Rose, Common and Chocolate Soldiers.

Habitat: Wetland

Time of departure: 0600 hours, depending on the weather (0530 from Jetwing Lagoon)

Duration of tour: 03 hours

Walking distance: Approximately 2 km

Distance to site: 60 km and a 1.25 hour drive from the Hotel (70 km and 1.5 hours from Jetwing Lagoon)

What is included: Transport to and from the site

What to bring/ what to wear: Earth-coloured, comfortable clothes, caps or hats, cameras, spotting scopes, field guides, insect repellent, sun block.

Muthurajawela Mangrove and Wetland

The name Muthurajawela – meaning ‘Swamp of Royal Treasure’ – says it all. It is indeed a gem of a marshland, boasting of about 190 species of plants and over 200 species of animals, including over 100 species of birds.

Muthurajawela – the largest saltwater coastal peat bog in Sri Lanka – is one of the island’s most important wetland habitats, extending over 3,068 hectares of marshland and mangroves.

Take a boat ride to see a rich assemblage of water birds, including various species of Herons, Bitterns, Egrets, Cormorants, Black-headed Ibis, Asian Open Bills, Lesser Whistling Teals, Pheasant-tailed Jaçanas, White-breasted Water hens, Purple Swamp hens, and Common Moorhens. Common perching birds (such as several species of kingfishers) birds of prey (such as the Brahminy Kite and Shikra), as well as mammals (such as the endemic Toque Monkey) and reptiles (such as Water Monitors and Saltwater Crocodiles), are also common.

Habitat: Wetland – specifically mangroves

Time of departure: 0700 and 1430 hours, depending on the weather (starting from the Hotel itself at Jetwing Lagoon)

Duration: 1.5 hours

Distance to site: Approximately 25 km and 40 minutes from the Hotel

What is included: Transport to and from the site, and boat fee

What is not included: All tips

What to bring/ what to wear: Earth-coloured, comfortable clothes, caps or hats, cameras, spotting scopes, field guides, insect repellent, sun block.





Kitulgala Rain Forest

Kitulgala is situated at the foothills of the western slopes of the central hills, southwest of Kandy but north of Adam's Peak.

Kitulgala is famous not only for its 'Kitul' extracted from the Fish Tail Palm and also because it was the location of the famous film by David Lean 'Bridge on the River Kwai'. The Kelani River flows through the area, providing Grade 2-4 rapids for white-water rafting, and making the area renowned for this sport.

Also found in this area is Kitulgala Forest Reserve, a small, lush patch of lowland rainforest.

Trek through this rainforest to see many of the endemic rainforest specialist birds seen in the famous Sinharaja National Wilderness Heritage Site: the Sri Lanka Spurfowl, Green-billed Coucals, Spot-winged Thrushes and Orange-billed Babblers. Also easily visible is a wide range of wild orchids, ferns and other plants.

Habitat: Lowland rainforest.

Time of departure: 0500 hours from the Hotel

Duration: 05 hours

Distance to site: Approximately 100 km and a 03 hour drive from the Hotel (110 km and 3.5 hours from Jetwing Lagoon)

What is included: Transport to and from the site, leech socks

What is not included: All tips

What to bring/ what to wear: Earth-coloured, comfortable clothes, caps or hats, cameras, spotting scopes, field guides, insect repellent, sun block.

Boat Safari on the Dutch Canal

When the Dutch colonised coastal Sri Lanka in the mid seventeenth century, they realised the value of the many lagoons that studded the coastline. They set about establishing a set of linking canals that meandered from the south of Colombo, north through Negombo and Chilaw to Kalpitiya. Prized cargoes of gems, pearls and spices were transported through these canals to Negombo, the port of export.

Take a serene boat ride through the historic Dutch canal, and see mangrove habitats and many birds such as Herons, Cormorants, Kingfishers, and a selection of birds of prey and perching birds.

Habitat: Mangroves

Time of departure: 0830 and 1530 hours from the Hotel, depending on the weather (0730 and 1430 hours from Jetwing Lagoon, starting from the Hotel itself)

Duration: 2.5 hours

Distance to site: Starting from the beach at the Hotel (starting from the lagoon at Jetwing Lagoon)

What is included: Cost of boat

What is not included: All tips

What to bring/ what to wear: Earth-coloured, comfortable clothes, caps or hats, cameras, spotting scopes, field guides, insect repellent, sun block.





Negombo's Fish Market

Fisheries play an important role in Negombo, and by centuries of descent, most of the people in Negombo are fisherfolk. About 2,300 boats operate from the Negombo harbour. Some of these are traditional, non-mechanised boats such as outrigger canoes (called *oru* in Sinhalese and *thony* in Tamil) and catamarans (literally meaning trees tied together in Tamil – or *Theppam*) and are used to fish in the shallow coastal waters on the continental shelf. Mechanised boats are used in deeper oceanic waters.

Take a walk around the bustling, noisy fish market and see fishermen taking fish from their nets, vendors bargaining and buying, and fish galore: herrings, sardines, snappers, breamers, croakers, groupers, parrot fish, sprats, catfish, mullets and shellfish such as prawns and crabs.

Habitat: Fish landing site. Be warned that it is rather smelly and you will encounter fish entrails and bones!

Time of departure: 0800 hours from the Hotel, depending on the weather (0730 from Jetwing Lagoon)

Duration: 1.5 hours

Distance to site: 10 minutes from the beach at the Hotel (30 minutes by boat from Jetwing Lagoon)

What is included: Transport to and from site

What is not included: All tips

What to bring/ what to wear: Comfortable clothes, caps or hats, cameras, closed shoes, sun block.

Wake up at 4.00 am if you are really interested, and visit the *Lellama* – the fish landing and auction site, which is a teeming hive of activity before dawn.

Wildlife Safari – Wilpattu National Park

Wilpattu National Park is one of the largest and oldest National Parks in Sri Lanka. It is among the top few national parks in the world for seeing leopards.

Wilpattu is located on the northwestern coast of Sri Lanka. A unique feature of this park is the existence of *villus* (small lakes) that form as a result of percolation of ground water to the surface. These *villus* are spread throughout the park. Thirty one species of mammals – such as leopards, elephants, sloth bears, water buffaloes, sambur, spotted deer and mongooses – have been identified within this national park. Because they are dominant predators on the island, leopards do not have to hide and are easily visible, lying out on roads and roadside. This park is also home birds, including wetland species such as Painted Storks, Open Bills, Little Cormorants, as well as many birds of prey.

Habitat: Dry monsoon forest, dry grasslands

Time of departure: 0400 or 0110 hours from all Hotels

Duration: 04 hours for a half-day tour and 10-12 hours for a full-day tour

Distance to site: 150 km and a 2.5 hour drive from the Hotel (160 km and 03 hours from Jetwing Lagoon)

What is included: Transport, entrance ticket, and 4-wheel jeep for travel within the park

What is not included: All tips

What to bring/ what to wear: Earth-coloured, comfortable clothes, caps or hats, cameras, spotting scopes, field guides, insect repellent, sun block.



Religious Tour

Sri Lanka is predominantly Buddhist, but other religions such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam are also practised here. In any parts of the country, this religious pluralism is evident.

Angulukaramulla Temple is the largest Buddhist temple in Negombo and has records since 1868. The beautiful architecture of the temple is one of its most attractive features. The devotional hall houses a large six-metre long reclining Buddha statue. In addition, the temple is renowned for its ancient paintings and murals depicting religious, as well as historical images. The beautiful shrine house contains fine sculptural works and paintings on the life of the Buddha, as well as important Buddhist events in Sri Lanka.

The Pillayar Hindu Temple has a recorded history of 250 years and is likely to be the oldest Hindu temple in Negombo. This is a temple dedicated to the elephant-headed God Ganesh, believed to be the lord of beginnings, remover of obstacles and patron of scribes.

In 1570, the Portuguese built St Mary's, a Roman Catholic Church, near the fort that they had built. The Dutch destroyed this, but a new church was rebuilt on the same premises in 1814. In 1874, the present building was begun, making St Mary's one of the oldest catholic churches in Negombo.



Next to the remnants of the Dutch Fort is a little Anglican church, St Stephen's, consecrated in 1879. This church was built on a mound that previously contained stored arms and ammunitions for the fort.

There are records of Muslims living in the area before the advent of the Portuguese. However, many mosques were destroyed during colonisation. The Negombo Grand Mosque was built in 1974.

Time of departure: 1000 hours from the Hotel (0930 hours from Jetwing Lagoon)

Duration: 2.5 hour

Distance to site: 10 km and a 15 minute drive from the Hotel (15 km and 30 minutes from Jetwing Lagoon)

What is included: Transport to and from the sites

What is not included: All tips

What to bring/ what to wear: Clothing appropriate for a religious site. Hats/caps as well as footwear should be removed on entry.





'The Gathering' - Elephants at Minneriya

Minneriya National Park is in the North Central Province. The Park was declared as a protected area to protect the catchment of the Minneriya reservoir and the wildlife of the surrounding area. The reservoir is ancient, dating back to the 3rd century AD.

During the dry season, when there is little fodder and water, the Minneriya reservoir provides a ready source of water for scattered groups of elephants in the area. Different herds journey to the reservoir, meeting up with each other to form larger, loose-knit associations. Eventually, when the dry season is at its peak, a daily ritual unfolds where all elephants in the area gravitate to the grassy plains exposed by the receding waters of the tank. This ritual has been dubbed 'The Gathering' by elephant enthusiasts.

Though elephants are the main attraction of Minneriya, the Park is worth a visit for more than just its elephants. There are other charismatic mammals such as leopards and sloth bears, reptiles (such as the marsh crocodiles) and as well as about 160 resident and migratory bird species.

Habitat: Dry monsoon forest, scrub forest and dry grasslands

Time of departure: 0900 hours from the Hotel (0830 hours from Jetwing Lagoon)

Duration: 03 hours

Distance to site: 195 km and a 04 hour drive from the Hotel (200 km and 04 hours from Jetwing Lagoon)

What is included: Transport, entrance ticket, and 4-wheel jeep for travel within the Park

What is not included: All tips

What to bring/ what to wear: Earth-coloured, comfortable clothes, caps or hats, cameras, spotting scopes, field guides, insect repellent, sun block.

Arankele Monastery and Forest

At Arankele forest, there are 6th century remains of a monastery and caves. Arankele lies just north of Kurunegala, which was once the capital of Sri Lanka. In ancient times, this monastery was inhabited by a sect of Buddhist monks and hermits. Present remains include stone carved caves used for meditation and for living, long flagstone meditating walkways through dense forest, halls for almsgivings, bathing ponds and a complete hospital.

The origin of this monastery dates back to the early Anuradhapura period, and the ruins to the 8th or 9th centuries. Many monks lived and meditated here. It is also said that a king once lived here and the flagstone pathway, would once have reached all the way to Sigiriya.

Even now, Buddhist monks who live here, live as the ancient monks did.

Habitat: Intermediate forest, scrub forest and dry grasslands

Time of departure: 0900 hours from the Hotel

Duration: 2.5 hours

Distance to site: 75 km and a 02 hour drive from the Hotel (85 km and 2.25 hours from Jetwing Lagoon)

What is included: Transport to and from the site

What is not included: All tips

What to bring/ what to wear: Clothing appropriate for a religious site. Hats/ caps as well as footwear should be removed on entry.





Sport Fishing

Negombo is a popular fishing centre, and the seas off the coast are an ideal location for the keen angler.

We offer professional sport fishing tours operating from the hotel beach. These tours are led by highly experienced village fishermen.

Close to the coast there are Groupers, Snappers and Bonefish; a bit further out there are Indian Mackerel, Barracuda, Jackfish, Trevally, Tuna and far out are Sailfish and Marlin. During your fishing trip, you may be accompanied by pods of dolphins. This trip is doubly attractive at dusk, because of the beautiful sunset.

Habitat: Open ocean

Time of departure: 0900 hours and 1600 hours from the Hotel, depending on the weather (0830 and 1530 hours from Jetwing Lagoon)

Duration: 2.5 hours

Distance to site: On the beach

What is included: Boat fee and fishing equipment

What is not included: All tips

What to bring/ what to wear: Comfortable clothes, caps or hats, cameras, sun block.

Not offered from Jetwing Lagoon, but fishing in the Negombo Lagoon can be arranged.

Dolphin watching in Kalpitiya

Just two hours north of the airport and three hours from Colombo, lies the narrow Kalpitiya peninsula enclosing the Puttalam lagoon. What is special about this area is that west of this peninsula, the continental shelf round Sri Lanka is at its narrowest. Here, in this area, is the Bar Reef Sanctuary, rich in marine diversity, including some of the most pristine coral reefs in Sri Lanka.

On this narrow continental shelf, just twenty-five minutes away from shore on a boat, are dolphins – sometimes seen in pods of hundreds. The commonest species encountered are Spinner Dolphins famous for their acrobatic displays of leaping vertically out of the water and spinning on their axes. Also seen are Indo-Pacific Humpback dolphins, which are found close to the lagoon mouth.

For the intrepid whale watcher, Kalpitiya is also one of three excellent whale-watching spots in Sri Lanka. From November to December and March to April, it is possible, just off the continental shelf, to see Sperm Whales. Other whales such as Blue Whales may also be seen.

Habitat: Open ocean

Time of departure: : 0430 hours, depending on the weather (0400 hours from Jetwing Lagoon)

Duration: 2.5 hours

Distance to site: Approximately 115 km and a 2 hour drive from the Hotel (130km and 2.25 hours from Jetwing Lagoon)

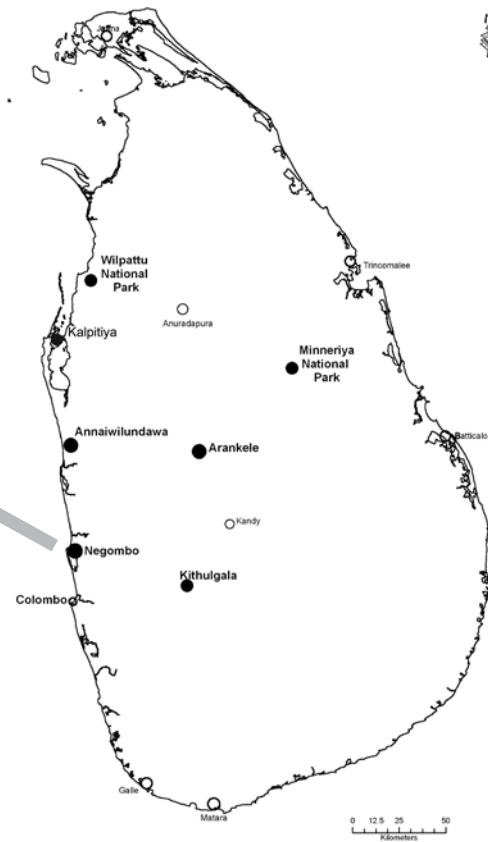
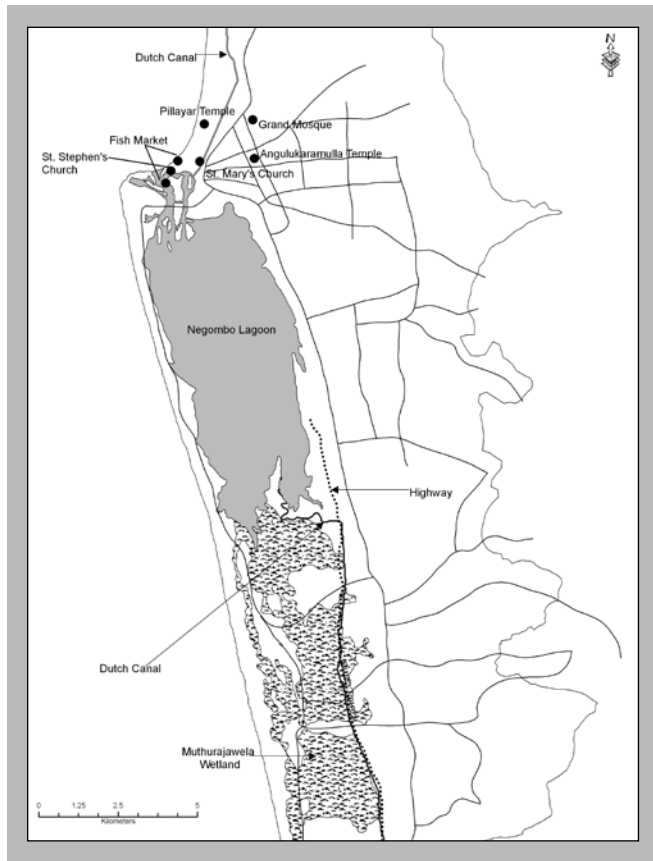
What is included: Transport to and from the site, and boat fee

What is not included: All tips

What to bring/ what to wear: Earth-coloured, comfortable clothes, caps or hats, water-proof cameras, sun block.



Location Map



Photocredits

Page	Caption	Credit
Contents page	Left to right: Pioneer (<i>Belenois aurota</i>); Little Egret (<i>Egretta garzetta</i>); Blue Oakleaf (<i>Kallima philarchus</i>); Dutch Canal. Negombo; Female fish vendor, Negombo fish market; Leopard (<i>Panthera pardus</i>); Angulukaramulla Temple, Negombo; 'The Gathering', Minneriya; Arankele; Sport fishing; Spinner dolphins (<i>Stenella longirostris</i>).	Left to right: © Hasanthan Lokugamage, © Chamara Amarasinghe, © Chamara Amarasinghe, © Sriyanie Miththapala, © Sriyanie Miththapala, © Niroshan Mirando, © Sriyanie Miththapala, © Srilal Miththapala © Hasanthan Lokugamage, © Anoma Alagiawadu, © Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne
Frontpiece	Bee-eaters on reeds at Muthurajawela Marsh.	© Hasanthan Lokugamage
2	Striated Heron (<i>Butorides stirata</i>), Annaiwilundawa Sanctuary.	© Hasanthan Lokugamage
3	Pied Kingfisher (<i>Ceryle rudis</i>), Muthurajawela Marsh.	© Hasanthan Lokugamage
4	Tree Nymph (<i>Idea iasonia</i>), Kitulgala rain forest.	© Chamara Amarasinghe
5	The Dutch Canal.	© Sriyanie Miththapala
6	Negombo's Fish Market.	© Sriyanie Miththapala
7	Leopard (<i>Panthera pardus</i>), Wilpattu National Park.	© Riaz Cader
8 & 9	Left to right: Reclining Buddha, Angulukaramulla Temple; Pillayar Temple; St Mary's Church; St Stephen's Church; Grand Mosque.	Left to right: © Chamara Amarasinghe, © Sriyanie Miththapala, © Chamara Amarasinghe, © Sriyanie Miththapala, © Sriyanie Miththapala
10	'The Gathering', Minneriya.	© Srilal Miththapala
11	Arankele.	© Hasanthan Lokugamage
12	Sport fishing.	© Anoma Alagiawadu
13	Spinner Dolphins (<i>Stenella longirostris</i>) in Kalpitiya	© Riaz Cader
14	Location maps.	© Dilhari Weragodatenna

Responsible Tourism

Jetwing Hotels is committed to practising responsible tourism. To this end, they have established a framework of environmental activities and audits to ensure that damage to the environment is minimised.

Because unregulated visitation and inappropriate behaviour by tourists can cause serious damage to habitats and species in natural habitats, we offer the following guidelines for our guests.

- Please avoid wearing bright colours on bird walks, as birds respond to colour and fly away. Earth-coloured – clothes browns and dull greens – are the best colours.
- Make sure you wear comfortable clothes that will keep you cool.
- Hats or caps, and sun block are essential.
- The best way to observe animals is to be quiet and avoid sudden movements. Point, rather than speak.
- Please obtain the services of an official tracker when entering a national park and listen to his instructions.
- Adhere to specify time limits when visiting national parks or reserves. Adhere also to speed limits.
- Refrain from off-roading and drive along prescribed paths. Off-roading damages habitats.
- You are entering the domain of wild animals. Please treat them with respect. Do not crowd or annoy them to get the perfect photograph.
- Refrain from using headlights, flashlights, sounds or call lures to attract animals.
- Refrain from putting your head or limbs out of windows of vehicles.
- Unless permitted, do not get down from the vehicle.
- Keep mobile phones on silent mode!
- Refrain from feeding wild animals.
- Do not pick or collect any specimens.
- Do not consume alcoholic beverages or travel under the influence of liquor in to the national park or reserves.
- Refrain from smoking.

Take only photographs, steal only time, leave only footprints – Anon

Contact the Resident Naturalist or Reception
at each Jetwing Hotel
Negombo, Sri Lanka.

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