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## DISCOVER NORTH CENTRAL ITINEARY

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*Discover North Central Sri Lanka, known for its locations in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, which have centuries-old irrigated agriculture, ancient Sinhalese kingdoms and places of Buddhist worship.*

### **DAY 01 – 18<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020**

*CHECK OUT AT CINNAMON LAKESIDE COLOMBO (BREAKFAST ENROUTE) – 5.00AM*

*TRAVEL TO YAPAHUWA – 5.15AM – 8.00AM*

*YAPAHUWA TOUR – 8.00AM – 10.00AM*

#### **YAPAHUWA**



**Yapahuwa** was one of the ephemeral capitals of medieval Sri Lanka. The citadel of Yapahuwa lying midway between Kurunagala and Anuradhapura was built around a huge granite rock rising abruptly almost a hundred meters above the surrounding lowlands.

In 1272, King Bhuvanakabahu transferred the capital from Polonnaruwa to Yapahuwa in the face of Dravidian invasions from South India, bringing the Sacred Tooth Relic with him. Following the death of King Bhuvanakabahu in 1284, the Pandians of South India invaded Sri Lanka once again, and succeeded in capturing Sacred Tooth Relic. Following its capture, Yapahuwa was largely abandoned and inhabited by Buddhist monks and religious ascetics.

Yapahuwa served as the capital of Sri Lanka in the latter part of the 13th century (1273–1284). Built on a huge, 90 meter high rock boulder in the style of the Sigiriya rock fortress, Yapahuwa was a palace and military stronghold against foreign invaders

*TRAVEL TO CINNAMON LODGE HABARANA – 12.00PM – 12.30PM*

*LUNCH AT CINNAMON LODGE HABARANA – 12.30PM – 13.30PM*

*MINNERIYA NATIONAL PARK – 14.00PM – 18.00PM*



**Minneriya National Park** is a national park in North Central Province of Sri Lanka. The area was designated as a national park on 12 August 1997, having been originally declared as a wildlife sanctuary in 1938. The reason for declaring the area as protected is to protect the catchment of Minneriya tank and the wildlife of the surrounding area. The tank is of historical importance, having been built by King Mahasen in third century AD. The park is a dry season feeding ground for the elephant population dwelling in forests of Matale, Polonnaruwa, and Trincomalee districts. Along with Kaudulla and Girithale, Minneriya forms one of the 70 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of Sri Lanka.

*TRAVEL BACK TO HOTEL – 18.00PM – 18.30PM*

*DINNER AT CINNAMON LODGE HABARANA – 20.00PM – 21.00PM*

## **DAY 02 – 19<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020**

*BREAKFAST AT CINNAMON LODGE HABARANA – 7.00AM – 8.00AM*

*TRAVEL TO RITIGALA – 8.00AM – 9.00AM*

**RITIGALA**



At 766 m (2,513 ft) above sea level, and 600 m (2,000 ft) above the surrounding plains, Ritigala is the highest mountain in northern Sri Lanka. The modern name Ritigala is derived from the ancient name *Ariṭṭha Pabbata* (Dreadful Mountain), mentioned in the Mahavamsa.

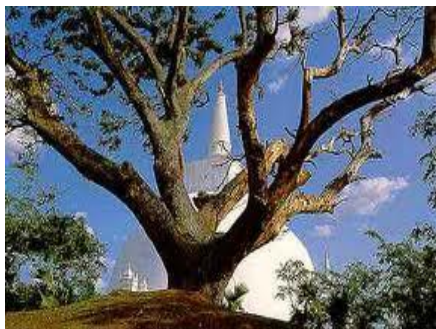
Its elevation is higher than the other main tourist attractions of the north central plains, namely Sigiriya, Dambulla and Mihintale. The significance of this topographical feature lies in the abrupt sheerness of the massif, its wooded slopes and wet microclimate at the summit. During the North East monsoon (December to February), Ritigala experiences the highest rainfall (125 cm) of entire dry zone.

The wet microclimate at Ritigala is a singular occurrence in the north central plains, the ancient Sri Lanka's "Wewu Bandi Rata" meaning "the land of rainwater reservoirs" in Sinhalese.

*TRAVEL TO ANURDHAPURA (LUNCH ENROUTE) – 10.30AM – 12.30PM*

*LUNCH IN ANURADHAPURA – 12.30PM – 13.30PM*

*ANURADHAPURA TOUR – 13.30PM – 15.30PM*



**Anuradhapura** – a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the north central part of the Island was the first capital (5th century BC - 9th century AD), the center of the island's Buddhist civilization and undoubtedly the grandest city of ancient Sri Lanka. In antiquity and the interest, it is the equal of any ancient 'buried city' in the world. The oldest historically documented tree on earth (over 2,200 years old) - The Sri Maha Bodhi, brought as a sampling of the tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment, and the island's oldest Buddhist shrines - some dating back to the 3rd century BC, impressive white 'dagabas' (relic chambers) and

monuments embellished with handsome stone carvings or sculpture, pleasure gardens, beautifully executed stone baths and ponds and a superb irrigation system of reservoirs and canals are the main attractions of Anuradhapura. Specific places to visit are - the Brazen Palace (2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.), with 1600 significant stone columns are the remains of a magnificent multi-storied residence for monks – an engineering marvel at the time, Ruwanweli Seya (2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C) the most famous of all the dagoba's, originally depicted the perfect water-bubble shape that modern restoration has not been able to accurately reproduce, Samadhi Buddha (3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.) regarded as the finest rock sculpture in the island - depicting the Buddha in a state of deep meditation, Isurumuniyarock temple (3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.) known for its rock carving of the “Lovers”, KuttamPokuna, twin ponds (3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.) which were used by monks of this glorious era as a bathing pool. Thuparama (3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.), the oldest dagoba in the island – enshrines the right collarbone of Buddha, Ratnaprasada with the best-preserved Guard Stone, Mahasena's Palace with its renowned Moonstone, Abayagiri and Jetevanarama – a huge dagoba said to be the largest brick-built structure in the world.

*TRAVEL TO CINNAMON LODGE HABARANA – 15.30PM – 18.00PM*

*DINNER AT CINNAMON LODGE HABARANA – 19.30PM – 20.00PM*

### **DAY 03 – 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020**

*TRAVEL TO SIGIRIYA FOR SUNRISE SHOT (BREAKFAST ENROUTE) – 5.30AM – 8.00AM*

*GROUP 1 – SIGIRIYA CLIMB*

*GROUP 2 – SIGIRIYA CLIMB - 8.00AM – 11.30AM*

#### **SIGIRIYA**

**Sigiriya** – this UNESCO World Heritage Site, a spectacular Rock Fortress, is one of Sri Lanka’s major attractions. The most impressive facets of the unique complex are the Water Gardens, the Frescoes of beautiful maidens, the Mirror Wall with ancient graffiti, the Lion platform and the Summit of 1.6 hectares, which was completely covered by buildings during the period of Sigiriya’s glory. Built by King Kashyapa (477-495 A.D), the “Lion Rock” is a citadel of unusual beauty rising 200m from the scrub jungle. The rock was the innermost stronghold of the 70-hectare fortified town and the base is ringed by a moat, rampart, and extensive gardens. The world-renowned frescoes (originally 500, of which only 19 remain today) which are in a sheltered pocket of the rock approached by a spiral stairway are painted in earth pigments on plaster. The old stairway to the top led through the mouth of a crouching lion but today only the huge paws remain giving an indication of the massive proportions of the head. Remains of the handsome royal citadel are on the summit and several caves for meditation, audience platforms and baths complete the unique site.”



*TRAVEL TO HOTEL AND DOWNTIME – 11.30AM – 12.30PM*

*LUNCH AT CINNAMON LODGE HABARANA – 12.30 – 13.30PM*

*TRAVEL TO KALUDIYA POKUNA – 14.00PM – 15.00PM*

**KALUDIYA POKUNA – 15.00PM – 18.00PM**



Kaludiya Pokuna is also rich with numerous biodiversity, both flora and fauna. The forest is home for many endemic and non-endemic species of flora and fauna, that prevail much more secure than other forests in Sri Lanka.

Site is surrounded by farmland and human settlements from the north, east, and west but is undisturbed by humans and the primates are not provisioned. There is no evidence to indicate that hunting, timber extraction, or woodcutting have occurred at the site.

*PRO BAR SESSION WITH ANGAMPORA ACT – 19.00PM – 19.30PM*

*DINNER AT CINNAMON LODGE HOTEL – 19.30PM – 21.00PM*

### **DAY 04 – 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2020**

*YOGA SESSION BY THE LAKE – 6.00AM – 8.00AM*

*BREAKFAST AT CINNAMON LODGE HABARANA – 8.00AM – 9.00AM*

*BIRD AND GARDEN TREK AT HOTEL PREMISES – 9.00AM – 10.00AM*

*HIRWADUNA TREK – 10.30AM – 12.00PM*



**Pidurangala Rock** is adjacent to Sigiriya Rock and is the best viewing spot of Sigiriya Rock as it is only slightly lower. Pidurangala is a popular spot for sunrise as you can enjoy 360-degree views of not only the valleys but also Sigiriya Rock. There is no need to choose between the two.

Many travelers wake up for the sunrise at Pidurangala and then head to sunset on top of Sigiriya Rock.



**Hiriwaduna Trek** - Just a 15-minute drive away from the comforts of Cinnamon Lodge Habarana, lies a scenic Native village with its unpaved gravel paths and humble village folk. Shaded on either side by dry zone shrub forest, the dusty gravel path and subsequently the red soil of the tank bund will lead the visitors to an indigo reservoir which sets a stunning contrast of

colors. A line of cormorants flying in formation will eventually stop to rest on a cormorant tree and the butterflies and dragonflies found at the edge of the shrubs create a kaleidoscope of color that rivals the equally vibrant wild flowers.

As you walk further along the Lake bund witness the silent and still waters of the reservoir rippled by a lone fisherman mounted on his catamaran. Experience the reservoir as the fishermen would do by taking a catamaran ride on the reservoir, and glide through the still waters and abundant lotus plants. At the end of the catamaran ride, experience another form of ancient village transport and take a ride in a bullock cart to end the experience of a lifetime.

*LUNCH AT HIRIWADUNA – 12.00PM – 13.00PM*

*TRAVEL TO POLONNARUWA – 13.00PM – 14.00PM*

*POLONNARUWA TOUR – 14.00PM – 17.00PM*



**Polonnaruwa** – this medieval city, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, rose to fame as the capital (10th - 12th century AD) after the decline of Anuradhapura. The entire landscape of the region is punctuated by huge man-made reservoirs, the most famous of which is the Parakrama Samudra or the Sea of Parakrama, larger in size than the Colombo harbour. The monuments are relatively well preserved and

give clear evidence of the glory of Sri Lanka's past. Highlights are the Royal Palace complex including the



Kings Palace and Audience Hall, the Quadrangle with its concentration of ancient heritage and the spectacular Gal Vihare complex of four massive images of the Buddha, cut from a single slab of granite - a highlight of ancient Sri Lankan rock carving. Some of the best examples of the Hindu influence – the Temples of Shiva, intricate statues of Hindu Gods, fascinating Buddhist temples, the Lankatileka and Watadage, the Galpotha, the Lotus bath, the Kiri Vihare Dagaba and the remains of a former Temple of the Tooth are other impressive sights.

*TRAVEL TO CINNAMON LODGE HABARANA – 17.30PM – 18.30PM*

*PRO BAR SESSION WITH PADURU PARTY AND DINNER (OUTDOOR BBQ) – 19.00PM – 21.30PM*

### ***DAY 05 – 22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2020***

*BREAKFAST AT CINNAMON LODGE HABARANA – 7.00AM – 9.00AM*

*CHECK OUT AND TRAVEL TO KATUNAYAKE – 9.00AM – 13.30PM*

*LUNCH AT TAMRIND TREE – 13.30PM – 14.30PM*

*AIRPORT STIMULATION CENTRE VISIT – 14.30PM – 18.30PM*

*TRAVEL TO COLOMBO – 18.30PM – 20.00*

*DINNER AT CINNAMONLAKESIDE COLOMBO – 20.00PM – 21.00PM*