

# **Sri Lanka Tourism to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Independence Day in Grandeur and Style**

Sri Lanka is preparing to celebrate the milestone 75<sup>th</sup> Independence day highlighting the unique attributes and natural wonders to visitors from across the world on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2023. The paradise island of Sri Lanka is recognized as a teardrop in the Indian ocean, offering a myriad of authentic travel and holiday opportunities encompassing the islands diversity, cultural and natural resources. Sri Lanka's spectacular beaches have captured the attention of millions of travelers for decades, and remains one of the hotspots for holiday seekers to date.

Sri Lanka offers everything which the modern traveler needs to experience from golden beaches and basking in the sun to numerous picturesque locations. This is an island which is compact and houses some of the world more sought after natural resources, cultural wonders and heritage sites dating back to 2500 years. The destinations exotic wildlife coupled with adventurous side of life and a dash of spicy cuisine is sure to liven up the experience of any holiday seeker which is 'So Sri Lanka'. One can have all these experiences within one day, making it a 365-day destination, providing the best of experiences all year round. With easy accessibility thanks to the improved infrastructure system, it is ideal for a round trip experience.

The four natural harbors gives visitors the ability to host their event giving it in an super sophisticated touch as a cruise tourism destination.

Sri Lanka Tourism, as the apex body of the country, does a yeoman service to promote the destination globally and enhance the tourism offering which is also the third highest foreign exchange earner since its establishment in 1966 . The administration has done everything in its capacity to bring Economic stability and revenue generation to the destination, in the journey towards progress. As the National Tourism Organization in the country, it has contributed in many ways to promote Sri Lanka as one of the best tourist hotspots in the world, by conducting global campaigns, participating in overseas travel and trade fairs, hosting international journalists and initiating new projects to attract global travelers.

The past several decades have posed many challenges. Sri Lanka has gone through numerous social, cultural and political changes, and amidst the worst crisis situations; Sri Lanka Tourism has forged ahead with plans and promotions to ensure the industry is sustained..Nevertheless, Sri Lanka Tourism took the risk of getting its Tourism back to normalcy, changing the negative mindsets of global travelers, encouraging them to visit Sri Lanka and assuring visitors that Sri Lanka is safe and secure since May 2022. It had been a difficult journey but as a result of the relentless promotional efforts, Sri Lanka Tourism together with the industry stake holders have achieved its target of bringing the maximum number of tourists to Sri Lanka, reaching the 720,000mark in 2022. Sri Lanka Tourism hopes to double these numbers this year (2023)and highlight Sri Lanka as one of the world's top tourist destinations. Gradually, Sri Lanka Tourism is enjoying the results of its hard work towards bringing back Tourism.

Sri Lanka went through a turbulent period during the second quarter of 2022, and with the fuel and gas shortages, Social unrest and the Economic crisis, posed a new set of challenges for the country which was on the brink of recovery post Covid-19 pandemic and the Easter Sunday attacks. The Tourism industry faced a temporary setback, gradually got back on track with the support and commitment from Sri Lanka Tourism and the private sector stakeholders, despite the travel advisories issued by several countries to avoid travelling to Sri Lanka due to its prevailing crisis.

For an interested traveler, Sri Lanka offers some of the best attractions in the world. Not only it has mesmerized travelers all across the world with its natural and cultural resources, exotic wildlife, amazing heritage, but also its resources for adventure, Sports and Film Tourism, with some of the best picturesque locations in the world, plus its delectable, authentic cuisine. Here are a few of the attractions which might be useful on a future visit, and be amazed by their magnificent splendor.

Sri Lanka is an exclusive haven for indigenous ayurveda treatments which is world famous. From across the globe, a large number of tourists visit specially to experience the soothing and healing senses of Ayurvedic Medicine, known to relax the mind, body and soul. There are a large number of wellness resorts, hotels specially dedicated to Ayurveda located across the country and this indigenous practice is knowledge based, natural environment and cultural repertory.

The delectable Sri Lankan cuisine is another attraction which is world renowned. Tourists from all across the globe love to taste the mouthwatering dishes prepared with traditional spices and herbs. Throughout the years, Sri Lankan cuisine has been enhanced with delectable cuisine from other cultures as well. For example, during the Dutch era, the iconic rice dish –Lamprais was introduced to the locals and this specific combination of rice boiled in stock accompanied by *frikkadels* (*frikadeller* meatballs), a mixed meat curry, blachan, aubergine curry, and seeni sambol are all wrapped in a banana leaf and baked in an oven. The Dutch also introduced traditional sweetmeats such as Breudher and Kokis, whereas Biryani and Watalappam are introduced from the Muslim culture. Food items such as Ulunduwadai ,Dosai , Parippuwadai ,sambar , are introduced from the Tamil culture. The Sri Lankan rice & Curry is the most famous of Sri Lankan dishes, while others such as Kiribath ,Kottu , hoppers , string hoppers and Pittu are also firm favourites,

Adventure Tourism has been making waves in the destination, as one of the key products of the Tourism sector. Sri Lanka is renowned as an Adventure Tourism destination among foreign travelers. Sri Lanka offers a myriad of Adventure activities such as a hike or trek in the Horton plains, surrounded by expanding mountains, lush green forests, paddy fields,parks and sleepy villages. Some of the best hiking areas in Sri Lanka include the Knuckles Mountain range, Pidurangala and Sigiriya, Ella rock & Little Adams peak ,Sinharaja forest for an ideal trek , (while enjoying the view of exotic Fauna & Flora, and wildlife) ,and canoeing in the Mahaweli river. Other adventure activities include White Water rafting in Kitulgala, Hot Air Ballooning, diving in the deep blue ocean, and experience great dive sites in Kalpitiya ,Ampara and Trincomalee., offering rare chances of wreck diving , skin diving and diving with Dolphins.

Whale watching in Mirissa and watching Dolphins at Kalpitiya can be an interesting regardless of time. The ever smiling, mischievous dolphins will put on a show while some of the oldest and the largest sea creatures, the humpback and the blue whales, will nonchalantly glide past you, when you embark on a whale/ dolphin watching excursion off the Southern, Eastern or the West coast of Sri Lanka. The ideal locations for whale watching would be Dondra Point (accessible from Galle, Hikkaduwa and Mirissa) and Trincomalee .

Wedding & Film Tourism is also another key factor which has made a difference in destination promotion. With a range of romantic locations and story book settings, Sri Lanka is sought after as a preferred destination for holding wedding ceremonies. Sri Lanka is a paradise island blessed with scenic views and picturesque locations, which would provide an ideal choice for film makers to shoot their films. Throughout the past few years, Sri Lanka Tourism has been promoting both wedding & Film Tourism, by hosting FAM tours to Sri Lanka and participating in Film Festivals and promoting the destination and the various travel and holiday opportunities it has to offer, as well as its potential towards providing spectacular locations for film shoots. Sri Lanka earned its reputation as a film tourism destination as early as the 1950s where David Leans famous war film ‘ ‘ Bridge on the River Kwai ‘ ‘(1957) was filmed in Kitulgala, Sri Lanka . Others include ‘ ‘ Indiana Jones and the temple of the doom ‘ ‘ (1984) , Tarzan the Ape man (1981) , Mother Theresa ( 1997) and Bombay Velvet (2015) . Film Tourism & Wedding Tourism are both niche markets and has potential to attract It has everything in store, from spectacular landscapes to sun kissed beaches in the Southern coastal area. The same applies to Wedding tourism, which offers some of the best hotels, locations and Wedding packages in store, for those who are interested in their matrimony in Sri Lanka. Rest is assured that it will be a memory of a lifetime, and worth cherishing.

Sri Lanka is also blessed with cultural and UNESCO world heritage sites, which has brought fame and prestige to Sri Lanka. These eight UNESCO heritage sites include, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa ,Sigiriya, Kandy , the Galle Fort , Sinharaja forest , and the Dambulla Temple and Central Highlands . These sites date back to thousands of years and up to date, it has ancient ruins which have been preserved for so many years, and the mastery and the architectural splendor of the ancient monarchs, and their skillful artists. The Sri Lanka holds the reputation for having the most ancient cultural pageant in the world, which is none other else than the Spectacular Kandy Esala Perahera. This pageant which is full of color and glamour is annually organized by the Sri Dalada Maligawa , , in order to pay homage to the Sacred Tooth Relics of the Buddha. It parades the streets for 10 days in the month of August, and consists of beautifully clad elephants, dancers, fire cracker performers and acrobats. This is one of the must see events of the season for tourists, both locals and foreigners alike.

The capital city Colombo is in itself a wonder. The city is majestically situated on the coast of the Indian Ocean, and while it has the bustling vibe of a vibrant, emerging metropolis, the ambience is one of relative calm and composure when compared to other capital cities of the region. The iconic Lotus Tower is the tallest in South Asia. Scattered with Buddhist temples, churches, Hindu temples and mosques, it sets an example for religious and cultural diversity.

As Sri Lanka celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> Independence day with pride, we look forward to bring back Sri Lanka to its former glory, enhancing its Tourism sector along with the support of its tourism stakeholders for a better future for Sri Lanka with a positive outlook .

**Contact:**

Public Relations Division  
Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau  
80, Galle Road, Colombo 03.  
+94 112 426 900 Ext 243 Email [sureshnie@srilanka.travel](mailto:sureshnie@srilanka.travel)