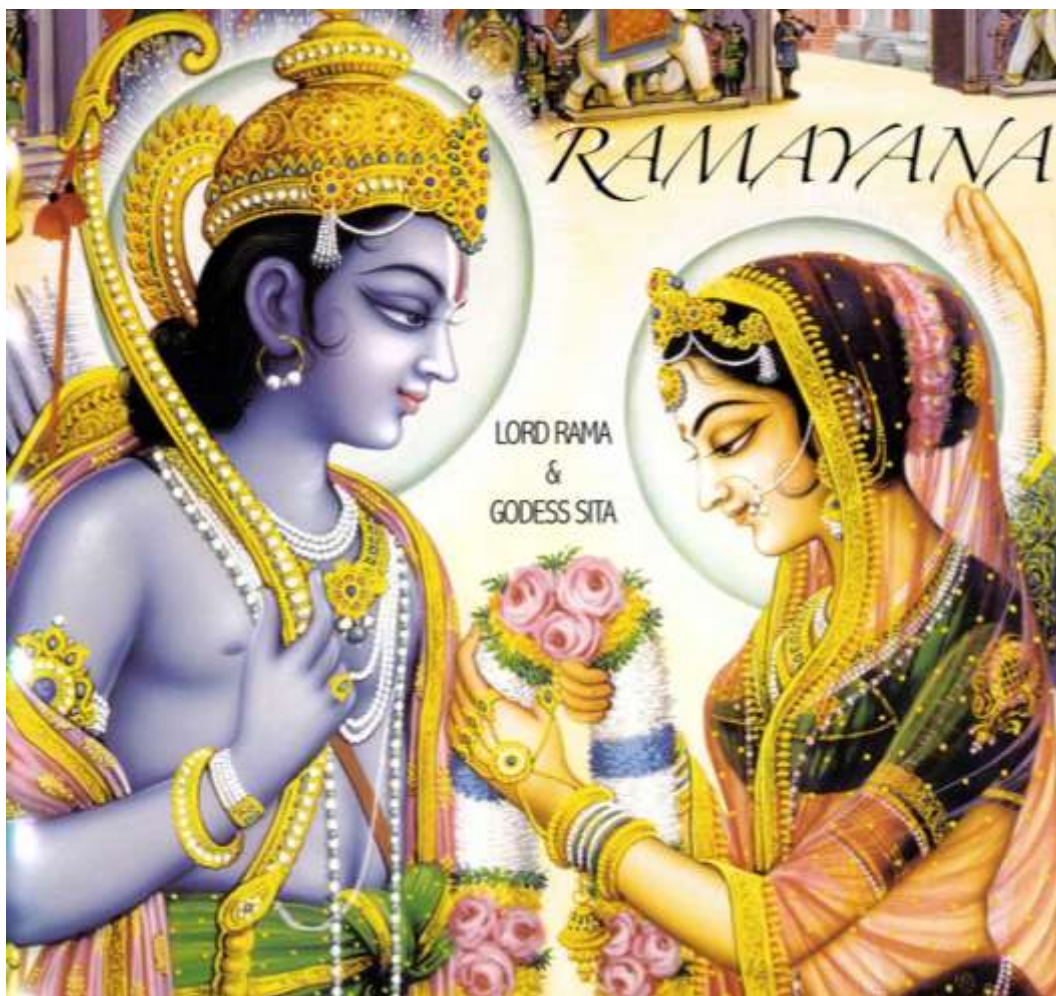




## SRI LANKA RAMAYANA TOUR

06 DAYS / 05 NIGHTS

Colombo, Dambulla, Sigiriya, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya



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## DAY 01: ARRIVE IN COLOMBO AND TRANSFER TO DAMBULLA

On arrival at Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo, you will be met by our local representative in Sri Lanka for a brief meet and greet. You will then proceed to **Dambulla**. En-route, we will visit Munneswaram Temple and Manawari Temple.

**Munneswaram Temple** is one of the holiest sites in Sri Lanka. It is a complex of five temples, the largest being dedicated to Lord Shiva, and others devoted to Lord Ganesha, Guardian Ayyanayake, Goddess Kali and Lord Buddha.



**According to Ramayana** – since Ravana was a brahmin, his killing cursed Lord Rama with Brahmasti. While travelling back to Ayodhya in Ravana's Vimana, Lord Rama felt that Brahmahasthi Dosham did not follow him at Munneswaram. At this spot, he preyed to Lord Shiva to seek a remedy for the dosham, who advised him to install four lingams at Munneswaram, Trincomalee, Mannar and Manavari.

**Manavari Temple** is the first Lingama out of five that were installed by Lord Rama on advice of Lord Shiva to remove Brahmahasthi Dosham. It is the only Lingama, apart from Rameshwaram, that is named after Lord Rama – Ramalinga Shivan. Since Lord Rama is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who installed the Lingama devoted to Lord Shiva, it is considered one of the most sacred places in Hindu religion.

After completing the tour of both the temples, we will continue our journey to Dambulla. Upon reaching, we will check-in at the hotel. Rest of the day is free for you to relax and explore Dambulla on your own.

Overnight stay at the hotel in Dambulla.

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Arrive at Bandaranaike International Airport and proceed to Dambulla
- Pray to Rama Lingam at Munneswaram and Manavari Temple

### DAY 02: VISIT DAMBULLA CAVE TEMPLE AND KONESWARAM TEMPLE

After breakfast, we will visit Dambulla cave temple.

**Dambulla Cave temple**, also called as the golden temple of Dambulla, is a complex of five grand caves that have been continuously inhabited since 3rd century BCE. The UNESCO World heritage site is a Buddhist shrine which also has idols of Lord Vishnu and Lord Ganesha. Although the caves do not feature in the Ramayana, their beauty is something which should not be missed. The caves have splendid Buddha statues that have been cut of the rock and beautiful frescoes that decorate the wall and ceilings.

After completing the tour of Dambulla Cave temple, we will transfer to Trincomalee to pray at Koneswaram Temple there.



Lord Rama installed the Shiva Lingam at **Koneswaram temple**, on advice of Lord Shiva, to seek repentance for killing a Brahmin – Ravana. Upon killing Ravana, Lord Rama was cursed with Brahmanhatya Dosham and installing the lingam helped cure Rama of this curse. Located on a majestic cliff overlooking the serene and clear waters of Gokarna Bay, the temple once had a thousand pillared hall that was destroyed by the Portuguese. Apart from Lord Shiva, the temple also has shrines of Lord Ganesha, Goddess Durga, Sun God Surya, Murukan and Agastya.

Later, return to Dambulla and explore the town on your own.

Overnight stay at hotel in Dambulla.

**SEGV'S RECOMMENDATION** – Sri Lanka has some of the finest beaches in the world, and the beaches at Trincomalee are no less. You can spend couple of hours at the beach,

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simply relaxing or you could try out the water sports available at the beach for a fun experience. Water sport activities like snorkelling, jet ski and even scuba diving are available at the beach.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Marvel at the ancient idols and beautiful frescoes at Dambulla Cave Temple
- Pray at the most beautiful Shiva temple built by Lord Rama on Gokarna Bay
- Enjoy a gala time at beaches in Trincomalee [RECOMMENDED]

### DAY 03: VISIT SIGIRIYA ROCK FORTRESS AND TRANSFER TO KANDY

After breakfast, we will proceed to Sigiriya to admire the beautiful Rock fortress there.

The ancient **Sigiriya Fortress** is a mesmerising palace that was built for king Kashyapa who made it his new capital. Although the fort has no proven relation with Ramayana, it is believed to be the golden palace of Ravana as described in Ramayana. The UNESCO World heritage site is located 600 ft above the ground below and requires travellers to climb almost 1200 steps and therefore the climb can be quite taxing. However, those who reach the top will appreciate the glimpses of ancient urban planning and landscaped gardens. Some even call it the 'eighth ancient wonder of the world'.



After the tour of Sigiriya Fortress, we will continue our journey to the picturesque **Kandy** city. Upon reaching, we will check-in at the hotel.

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Once the capital of the last independent kingdom of Sri Lanka, **Kandy** is today the second largest city in the country. The charming city is centred around the scenic Kandy lake and is surrounded by mountains covered by tea plantations and forests. Kandy is the site of Sita Kotuwa, where Goddess Sita was kept by Ravana before she moved to Ashok Vatika.



At Kandy, we will visit the popular **Temple of Sacred Tooth Relic** in the evening. The temple is not a part of the Ramayana. Located in the Royal Palace, the temple houses the sacred relic – a tooth of Gautum Buddha which was retrieved undamaged from his pyre by his disciple Khema. During the prayers, the golden casket in which the tooth is kept is revealed for the devotees to see and flowers are offered.

Overnight Stay at Hotel in Kandy.



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**SEGV'S RECOMMENDATION** – The Kandy Lake Club has been hosting the Cultural Dance show in Kandy for last 35 years. The wonderful show features all cultural dancing styles prevalent in Sri Lanka under one roof and is therefore a marvellous way to learn about Sri Lankan culture. The graceful movement of dancers and their vibrant costumes make this show a must watch. Look out for the fire walking performance which is a dance form inspired by Sita Devi's Agni Pariksha.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit the most beautiful 'Palace in the air' – Sigriya Rock Fortress
- Transfer to the beautiful and charming Kandy city
- Offer your prayers to Gautam Buddha at Temple of Sacrid Tooth Relic
- Enjoy a wonderful cultural performance at Kandy Lake Club [RECOMMENDED]

### DAY 04: KANDY TOUR AND TRANSFER TO NUWARA ELIYA

After breakfast, we will visit few important sites that have been featured in Ramayana on our way to **Nuwara Eliya**.

The first site is **Sita Kotuwa in Hasalaka**. Goddess Sita was brought to the Kotuwa in Maharani Mandodari's palace when Ravana first abducted her from the forest. She stayed here before she was moved to Ashoka Vatika. When she was first abducted, Maharani Mandodari warns Ravana to return Goddess Sita to Lord Rama otherwise he would be destroyed by Lord Ram's wrath.



Next, we will move to **Bhakta Hanuman temple** in Rambodha Village. When Lord Hanuman first set his foot in (Sri) Lanka, he searched for Goddess Sita in hills of Ramboda. A grand temple has now been built in this place with a magnificent 16 feet idol of Lord Hanuman. The black granite idol is dressed in beautiful silk clothing and decorated with flowers. The well-maintained temple is surrounded by scenic beauty and offers mesmerising views.

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After giving prayers at the Hanuman Temple, we will continue our journey to the gorgeous **Ramboda falls**. These are one of the highest water falls in Sri Lanka. We will stop by the falls for a short time to soak in the beauty of the falls and the surrounding regions.

Finally, we will proceed to the beautiful tea garden county of **Nuwara Eliya** where we will check-in at the hotel.

**Overnight Stay at the hotel in Nuwara Eliya.**



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit Sita Kotuwa where Goddess Sita was held by Ravana
- Pray at Bhakta Hanuman temple where Lord Hanuman first searched Goddess Sita
- Enjoy the views at Ramboda Falls – one of the highest falls in Sri Lanka
- Check-in at your hotel in the beautiful Nuwara Eliya

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## DAY 05: NUWARA ELIYA TOUR

After breakfast at the hotel, we will proceed for the Ramayana sights tour of Nuwara Eliya.

We shall begin the tour with a visit to **Divurumpola**. The Buddhist temple is the site of Goddess Sita's Agni Pariksha. When Lord Ram doubted Sita for not being chaste while being a prisoner of Ravana, Goddess Sita asked Lakshman to light a fire to prove otherwise by passing the Agni Pariksha at this spot.

After the temple tour, we will visit **Hakgala Botanical Garden**. The garden has been built at the site of the ancient Ashok Vatika where Goddess Sita lived while she was a hostage. The gardens here are extremely beautiful featuring some exotic plant and animal species.

Located near the Hakgala Botanical Garden is the **Sita Amma Temple**. This is the only temple in the world dedicated to Sita Amma. It is the exact site where Goddess Sita was kept captive by Ravana. The temple has also been consecrated by Lord Hanuman whose giant footprints can be found at the site.



Lastly, we will visit **Gayathri Peedam**. The temple is believed to be the place where the Lord Shiva appeared before Prince Meghanath, son of Ravana, after he performed intense tapasya and granted him supernatural powers. The Shiva Lingams here have been brought from the holy Narmada river in India.

Overnight stay at your hotel in Nuwara Eliya.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit Sita Amma temple

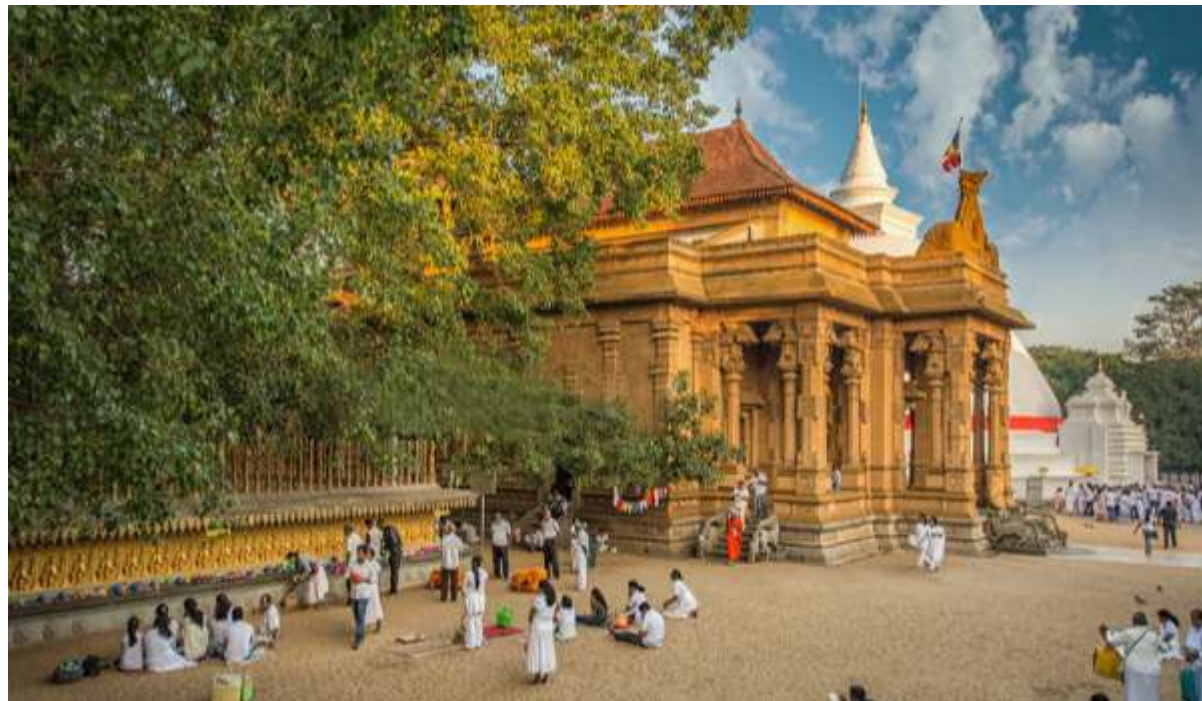
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## DAY 06: COLOMBO SIGHTSEEING TOUR AND DEPARTURE

After breakfast at the hotel, we will transfer to Colombo. Enroute we will visit Kelaniya Temple.



**Kelaniya temple** is a buddhist temple that has murals depicting the coronation ceremony of Vibheeshan after Ravana's death. The temple is located by the Kelani river, which finds mention in Valmiki's Ramayana. This is the last holy site associated with Ramayana that we will visit on the tour.

After visit to the temple, we will engage in a short sightseeing and shopping tour of **Colombo** – the capital city of Sri Lanka.

During the panoramic tour, we will see the most important sights in the city- **Colombo lighthouse** which served as a prison cell for the last Sri Lankan king, **Gangarmaya Buddhist temple** – one of the most important religious sites in Colombo, **War memorial** dedicated to the army personnel that lost their lives in the two world wars and **many more such landmarks**.

After the city tour, you will transfer to the international airport to board a flight to India.

Arrive home with pleasant memories of your Ramayana tour in Sri Lanka organised by State Express Global Voyages, which we are sure you will treasure for a lifetime.

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Pray at Kelaniya temple where Vibhushan was crowned king after Ravana's death
- See the most famous sights in Colombo City – Capital of Sri Lanka
- Board flight to return back to India

“TOUR END”



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