

# 5 Nights Tour – RAMAYANA TOUR

## DAY 01

AIRPORT/ KATARAGAMA

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Arrive at Bandaranaike International Airport and met by your guide and travel to Kataragama. En-route visit Ussangoda. Visit Kataragama temple in evening. Dinner & overnight in Kataragama.

### Ussangoda

According to Ramayana, after meeting Seetha Devi Lord Hanuman decided to test the strength of the mighty King Ravana and his army of Rakshasas. In the event that unfolded Lord Hanuman's tail was set on fire by the Rakshasas, who in turn went on to torch some parts of King Ravana's empire. Ussangoda is one of the torched areas, which is said to have been an airport used by King Ravana.

### Kataragama temple

This is the temple of Lord Karthikeya Subramaniam at Kataragama. Lord Karthikeya was requested to go to the battlefield by Lord Indra on the last day of war. This was done to protect Lord Rama from the wrath of Brahmasthra aimed by King Ravana which otherwise would have weakened Lord Rama. The benefit was one of the most powerful weapon Brahmasthra aimed at Lord Rama for the second time was rendered useless by the presence of Lord Karthikeya.

3 pooja or offerings take place daily. Make sure you have a tray full of fruits, incense and of course little money, to be offered.

## DAY 02

KATHARAGAMA | ELLA | NUWARA ELIYA

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After breakfast leave the hotel and travel to Nuwaraeliya. Visit Ella, Seetha Amman kovil, Haggala botanical garden and Divurumpola.

### Ella

Ella is a small mountain village near Bandarawela and boasts three locations linked to the Ramayana where local legend claims Ravana was hiding Sita. First there is the Ravana Ella Cave, located at the massive Ella Falls; a breathtaking 1080 feet high waterfall that cascades into several falls. The rocky undergrowth of the waterfall is Khondalite, a kind of limestone which undergoes faster decay as hard gneiss or granite. This has resulted in many caves being formed near the falls. King Ravana is said to have lived in one of the caves above the waterfall. A nearby pool bored out of the rock by the gushing waters is where Sita is said to have bathed Ravana.

### Divurumpola Temple

Still revered by thousands, this holy haven was the place where Sita performed her Agni Pariksha (proving her chastity) to her husband Rama. Continuing the practice for thousands of years, villagers still pledge their fidelity or take oaths there and even in certain courts, this agreement was binding. This place has been respected and worshipped by people down the ages.

### Hakgala Botanical Gardens

The Hakgala Botanical Gardens was one of the pleasure gardens of King Ravana. This garden was expanded during the British period and has a wide variety of flowers including an excellent collection of orchids. This is the exotic pleasure garden where King Ravana kept the depressed Sita, insisting that she marry him. It was here where the heartwarming meeting took place between her and Hanuman, who brought her Rama's ring with the news that Rama was looking for her. He offered to carry her back but she refused saying it would be an insult to Rama's honor if she did so. Part of this majestic garden still exists. It is also said that Hanuman nearly destroyed it in order to prove to Ravana of the forces against him.

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### Sita Amman Temple

The Sita Amman Temple can be seen en route to the Hakgala Botanical Gardens. The prominent temple architecture will not fail to attract your attention. Ancient statues of Rama and Sita can be seen on one side of the temple. The temple today is a modern building with its paintings, statues and pillars decorated with sculptures; all depicting the tale of Rama and Sita.

## DAY 03

NUWARA ELIYA | KANDY

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After breakfast travel to Kandy. En-route visit tea plantations, tea factories, ramboda waterfall and Sri Bhakta Hanuman temple. In Kandy, visit temple of tooth relic.

### Sri Bhakta Hanuman Temple

In the hills of Ramboda where Hanuman was searching for Sita, the Chinmaya Mission of Sri Lanka built the Sri Bhakta Hanuman Temple which is visited by thousands of devotees every year.

### Temple of the tooth relic

This temple, the most important one for The Sri Lankan Buddhists was built in the 16th Century A.D. solely for the purpose of housing the tooth relic. Observe the magnificent Architecture of that period and experience the tranquility of the atmosphere.

## DAY 04

KANDY | MATALE | DAMBULLA

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After breakfast travel to Dambulla. En-route visit a spice garden. Visit Dambulla Cave Temple and Ritigala. Then visit Cobra cave. Dinner & overnight stay in Sigiriya.

### Sigiriya Rock Fortress

Is home to the "5th century Fortress in the Sky" which is the fantastic single wonder of the Island. It is also known as Lion Rock because of the huge lion that used to stand at the entrance to the fortress. Within its triple-moated defense the huge rock rises almost to a sheer height of 600ft. On its summit are the foundations of what was once a great and sumptuous palace and gardens complete with swimming pool. On one of the stairways, the only known ancient work of Sinhalese secular painting which has survived in the form of Frescos of life-sized damsels in all the freshness and delicacy of their original color.

### Ritigala

Ritigala has 70 caves that have been used as dwellings by the earliest inhabitants of Sri Lanka and subsequently as monasteries. Ritigala in the Anuradhapura District is associated with the episode in the Ramayana where Hanuman is sent to the Himalayas to fetch medicinal herb to treat the injured Luxhmana. However, the mountain fragment slipped and fell while Hanuman was over Lanka, and it broke into pieces.

### Cobra cave

This is called Cobra Hooded Cave as it has its shape. The tradition states that Sita was held in captivity here. There are many pre-historic drawings on its ceiling. There is a distinct link between Sita and the cave and it the following is inscribed, 'Parumaka naguliya lene'. It would have been inscribed after Rawana's period but positively it has a connection to Sita's stay in this cave, as the word 'naguliya' refers to Sita.

Dinner & Overnight stay at the Hotel

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After breakfast we leave for the Munishwaram Temple & Manavari Temple in Chilaw.

#### Munishwaram Temple

It is believed that Munishwaram predates the Ramayana and a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva was located here. Munishwaram means the first temple for Shiva (Munnu + Easwaran). A Shiva Lingam was already here when Lord Rama visited this place. Lord Rama after his victorious battle left for Ayodhya with Sita in one of King Ravana's Vimanas. He felt he was being followed by a Bramhaasthi Dosham (a malevolent black shadow) as he had killed King Ravana who was a Brahmin.

#### Manavari Temple

When the Vimana was passing over Munishwaram, he felt the Vimana vibrating, and realized the Brahmaasti Dosham was not following him at this particular point. He stopped the Vimana at this juncture and asked god Lord Shiva for advice. Lord Shiva blessed Lord Rama and advised installing and praying at four lingams located at Manavari, Thiru Koneshwaram, Thiru Ketheshwaram and Rameshwaram in India as the only remedy to get rid of the dosham. The first lingam was installed at Manavari about 5km from here, near the banks of the Deduru Oya. At the Manavari Temple Chilaw Manavari is the first lingam installed and prayed by Rama and till date this lingam is called as Ramalinga Shivan. Rameshwaram is the only other lingam in world named after Lord Rama.

Wake up in the last day at Sri Lanka morning in Colombo and have some delectable breakfast at your hotel before you head out to the scenic drive to the international airport for your departing flight and a safe journey home.