

The cultural triangle in Sri Lanka



My husband and I are the "dream team" when it comes to travelling. On multiple occasions we discussed what would be a dream-destination when it comes to a 'honeymoon' experience and we both, almost simultaneously, bailed out on the typically picturesque crown favourites like Maldives or Bali. This is because when we travel, we want to quench that thirst to learn about new cultures, imbibing the culture and history of a place. Which is why we chose Sri Lanka, and here we share a bit of our dream vacation.

A holiday of seven days is not sufficient to fully live in the age-old heritage of a country teeming in cultural delights; however, if we were to wing it, we would begin with the famous cultural triangle.

Colombo is perhaps not worth dedicating a day to, unless of course you have family or friends to visit. Thus, I would highly recommend you assign at least two days of site seeing for Kandy, by taking the morning express train from Colombo, to delight in the Temple of the Tooth

and Kandy dance performance.

The Temple of the Tooth houses the relic of the same name, and is one of the most sacred places of worship in the entire Buddhist world. Bear in mind you are in a country which has a 70 percent Buddhist population and a culture, defying what the news media or the political warfare may suggest, still spells peace.

The ancient cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa are usually either/or choice for most people. Anuradhapura is believed to be the city that served as capital of the Sinhalese from the fourth century BC, and besides being a UNESCO World heritage site, it still remains a most well-preserved ruin of ancient Sri Lankan civilisation.

Polonnaruwa is the second most ancient city of Sri Lanka's kingdoms, a World Heritage Site for its best planned archaeological relic sites with endless mysteries. The monkeys or the toque macaques have been living in the ruins since the end of human occupation and continue to

thrive, reminding you of King Louie's den from the Jungle Book!

If you buy a cultural triangle ticket it will cost you a hefty 50 dollars, but individual entries to any of the big three sites will cost you 25 dollars each, so the combo makes sense for value. The combo ticket also allows entry to smaller attractions such as Ritigala, Nalanda Gedige, etc.

The Avukana Buddha statue located near Kekirawa is one of the finest standing statues of the Buddha in the world. It shoots up to over 40 feet and is best viewed at sunset.

If you can stretch your trip a little longer, drag yourself to the southern coast of Sri Lanka that offers various spots of tranquillity, almost comatose village-life, with endless options of things to do on its beautiful beaches, colonial landscapes, unique fishermen techniques and a tempting selection of luxurious beach hotels to ecological colonial-era villas.

So, are you ready?

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Photo courtesy: Naaz Fahmida

