



Sri Lanka

Elephants, Eagles and Sperm Whales!

11 Days

From elephants and leopards to hornbills, eagles, turtles, whales and dolphins, students will be face to face to with animals and birds of all shapes and sizes in their natural environments during this fascinating 11-day biology field trip. Education is at the heart of this expedition as students learn the importance of the country's ecosystems and the measures being taken to preserve its wildlife. After getting up close to nature through trekking, safari tours and sanctuary visits, the expedition will conclude with a relaxing stay on the south coast with a chance to swim off the island's coral reef. An eye opening trip which will stay with students forever.



[Learn more about our Carbon Labels](#)

Your Recommended Educational Journey

Days 1 - 2

Depart from the UK, Arrive in Sri Lanka

LD

Today we depart the UK for Sri Lanka! Upon arrival in Sri Lanka, we meet our local STC Expedition Leader and transfer directly to our hotel. Depending on our time of arrival, there may be a chance to explore Colombo - Sri Lanka's vibrant capital. After an evening meal at our hotel, there will be the opportunity to listen to a fascinating lecture on natural history, delivered by a local expert.

Day 3

Colombo to Sinharaja

BLD

After breakfast, we begin our 200km journey to the Sinharaja Rainforest, approx. 4hrs. After checking in to our hotel, we receive the first taste of our new tropical surroundings with a beautiful walk up to a nearby waterfall. We also have the chance to learn about the local industries in the area, such the extraction of treacle from the fishtail palm tree. Later we enjoy dinner and overnight in our hotel.

Day 4

Sinharaja Rain Forest

BLD

The Sinharaja Forest Reserve is one of the least disturbed and biologically unique lowland rainforests now remaining in Sri Lanka; it is surrounded by 22 villages with a population of approximately 5000 people. Our day will start with a very early breakfast before embarking on a 12 km exploration into this unique forest. After a long but exhilarating day, we return to our hotel and enjoy a well-deserved dinner.

Day 5

Sinharaja to Udawalawe (70km / 3 hours)

BLD

After breakfast, we head off to the Udawalawe Elephant Transit Home, a 3hr drive over 70km. The Home is a sanctuary for up to 35 baby orphan elephants who have become separated from their mothers. The centre provides a home for these baby elephants, ensuring that they receive food and medical care and, when strong enough, they are released back into their natural environment. We will have the chance to watch the elephants' feeding hour, when the small elephants rush to drink milk and play with their mates – a beautiful and entertaining sight! We then proceed to the Udawalawe Camp, on the edge of the national park, from where we enjoy our first safari into the Udawalawe National Park.

Day 6

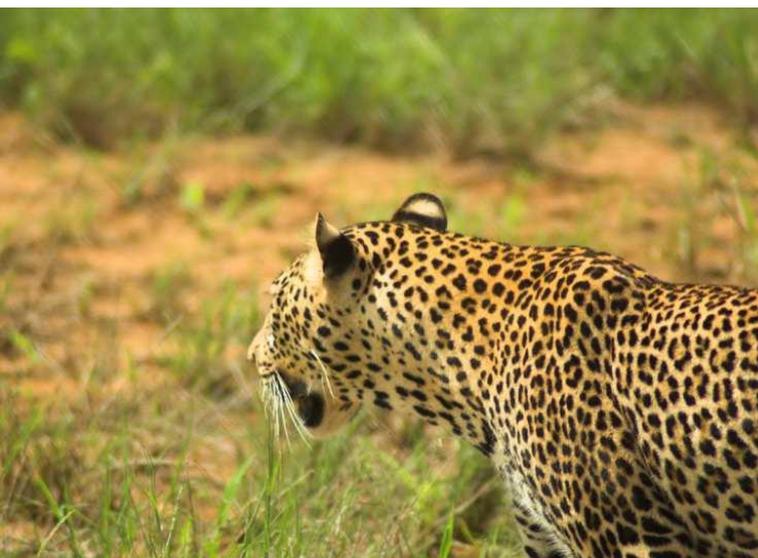
Udawalawe National Park

BLD

The Udawalawe National Park is in the southern dry zone of Sri Lanka and spans approximately 31,000 hectares. It is not unusual to see herds gather to feed and bathe at the waterholes in the park. With approximately 400 elephants residing within the park's boundaries, it is an amazing and unforgettable experience to witness these elephants, both adults and young in their natural habitat. The August 2011 census of Asian elephants in Sri Lanka stated that there were approximately 5800 of these animals living on the island's shores. In addition to the main attraction, the Park is home to many water buffalo, water monitor lizards, sambar deer, monkeys and the occasional leopard. It is also an exciting location for bird enthusiasts; an incredible variety of bird species inhabit the park and many others pass through on their migratory routes. A four wheel open-top safari is the best way to experience the natural wonders that this protected reserve has to offer.



- Day 7** **Udawalawa to Yala** BLD
- After breakfast, we proceed to Yala National Park, approx. 2hrs and 80km. Yala is the second largest national park in Sri Lanka and here we meet local farmers who will talk to us about the Yala Leopard Project and the issues surrounding the so called 'leopard/human conflict'. Unfortunately, this is a serious issue for the rural communities living on the outskirts of the National Park. A decrease in habitat and wild prey has caused an increase in the number of leopard attacks on domestic animals and cattle in nearby villages. The local population does not understand this big predator mainly due to the attacks on their cattle and consequently there have been a number of human attacks on leopards. This project is therefore about educating farmers, schoolchildren and local authorities with regards to the importance of leopards in ecosystems. The objective is to develop the local economy and increase leopards' conservation efficiency. In the evening, we enjoy a safari out into the national park followed by dinner at our campsite.
- Day 8** **Yala National Park** BLD
- We start the day with a 'take-away' breakfast before embarking on a full day safari. Yala was designated a wildlife sanctuary in 1900 and is best known for its variety of wild animals; it is important for the conservation of Sri Lankan elephants, Sri Lankan leopards and aquatic birds. On arrival in Yala, we meet local farmers who give us an understanding of the leopard situation in this area. We look out for pugmarks (footprints) and other clues that leopards are ever present in this area. We then enjoy an evening visit to the Katharagama Shrine, where we explore the connection between animals and Gods; a debate will also be encouraged amongst the group on faith versus science.
- Day 9** **Yala to Ahangama** BLD
- After breakfast, we make the 100km journey to Ahangama, approx. 2.5hrs. Here we check in to our hotel and enjoy lunch. Next we head to the ancient port of Galle, also known as being Sri Lanka's first international commerce and trade centre. Today Galle is the bustling provincial capital and administrative centre of the south. It is famous for its beautiful Unawatuna Bay, where the sea is protected by the reef, making swimming safe. We enjoy a tour of the city, including the Galle Fort, which will be followed by a visit to the Turtle Conservation Project. We then head back to our hotel where we enjoy a good dinner before resting for the evening.
- Day 10** **Whale watching** BLD
- We experience our final day in Sri Lanka with a day of whale watching! The south coast of Sri Lanka is one of the very best places to see Blue Whales in the world, and Sri Lanka boasts the longest Blue Whale season. Sperm Whales are also present with pods. The whales are on their annual migratory route, travelling from the Horn of Africa up to the waters of the Arabian Sea, and can be seen from November to April in the waters around Sri Lanka. Other cetacean species that can be seen include the Bryde's Whale, Dwarf Sperm Whale, Spinner Dolphin, Striped Dolphin and the Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin. After this unforgettable experience, we will head back to the beach for swimming and relaxation before returning to our hotel in Ahangama.
- Day 11** **Return to UK** B
- We bid farewell to Sri Lanka as we head to the airport for our return flight home.



Look what's included:

- International flights
- All accommodation, transportation and activities
- All food as described above
- Local, bi-lingual, first-aid qualified STC tour leader
- Parent and student trip launch presentation
- Pre-travel training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for school staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Emergency Medical & Repatriation Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Donations to two carbon & conservation charities
- Free Fairtrade t-shirt for every participant and teacher
- Free travel guide book to your destination

What's not included:

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations or Covid tests
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters (ask for guidance)
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Personal effects and cancellation insurance



A word about Responsible Tourism

On our expeditions and educational journeys, we strive to connect teachers and students with the people they meet, nurture the cultures they experience and protect the beautiful environments they are lucky enough to explore.

Many companies talk the talk, few truly walk the walk. While we are far from perfect, we are leading the way in sustainability in the school travel sector. In 2018 we were the first UK travel company to become **Travelife Certified** – a verified sustainability certificate formally recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.



This is our passion, and we'd love to tell you more about it in due course. In the meantime, for more information on some of the steps we take as a company to make our operations more sustainable, please visit:

<https://www.thestc.co.uk/travel/what-do-we-do/>

Trees for Life

Physical Rating for this trip: Grade 2



Some low level physical activities included in your trip, including walking on uneven terrain, maybe a morning/afternoon trek of two to four hours. That said, no physical preparation is required to make the most of the tour. High humidity and temperatures can occur at certain times of the year.

Cultural Rating for this trip: Grade 3



Students should expect some culture shock. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty. The food will be quite different to home and English, whilst still spoken, will be less prevalent. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and get the most out of your trip. We're likely to visit remoter locations on this tour where access to western style services may be sporadic. Often on trips of this grading there are parts of the itinerary which are more remote, interspersed with sections which are more 'comfortable'.



Travel Safety & Other Pre-Travel Training

Preparing students and teachers for their upcoming adventure is an opportunity to teach important life skills and a vital part of our overall approach to safety management. Please ask for your quote for the training schedule specific to this educational journey. Topics covered will include:

Responsible Tourism workshop

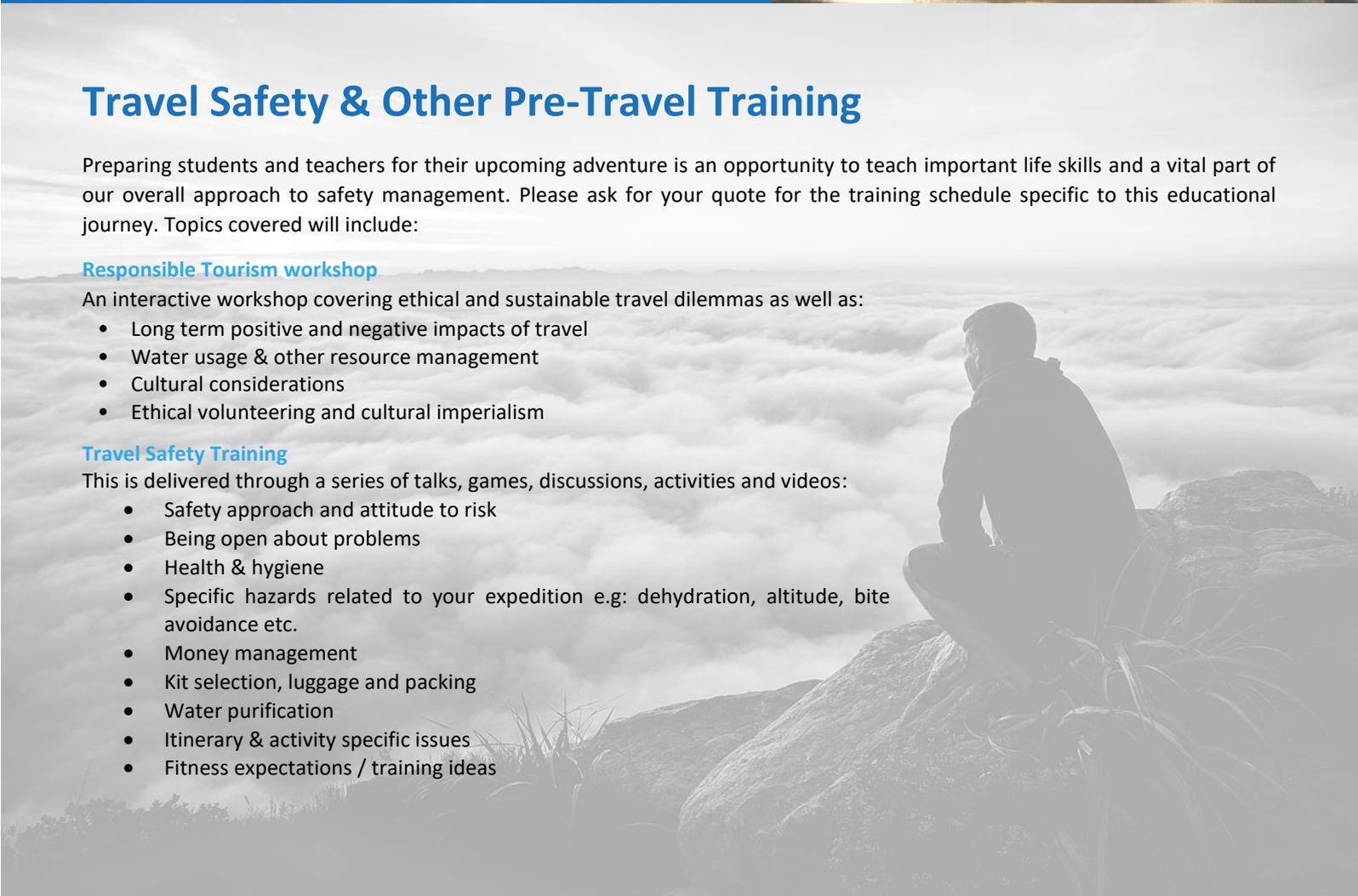
An interactive workshop covering ethical and sustainable travel dilemmas as well as:

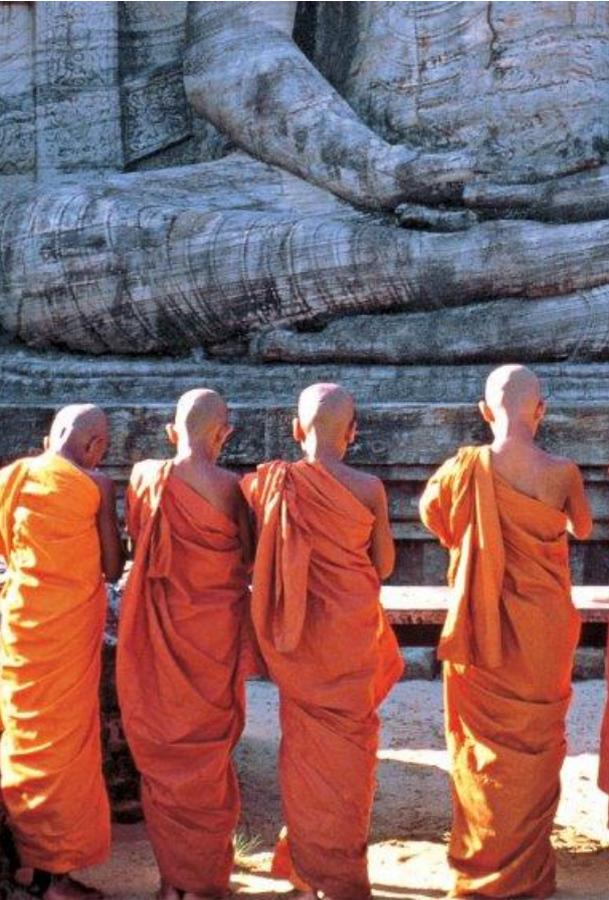
- Long term positive and negative impacts of travel
- Water usage & other resource management
- Cultural considerations
- Ethical volunteering and cultural imperialism

Travel Safety Training

This is delivered through a series of talks, games, discussions, activities and videos:

- Safety approach and attitude to risk
- Being open about problems
- Health & hygiene
- Specific hazards related to your expedition e.g: dehydration, altitude, bite avoidance etc.
- Money management
- Kit selection, luggage and packing
- Water purification
- Itinerary & activity specific issues
- Fitness expectations / training ideas





A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your educational journey

1 Ask for your personalised quote & further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your adventure itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an adventure that's just right for you and your students. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk and threat assessments to help you with your trip approval process. Ask for posters and your Pre-Booking Information Pack too.

3 Arrange a trip launch evening

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the planned adventure with comprehensive information covering the itinerary, safety management, the build-up to the trip and lots more. There is also plenty of opportunity for questions.



The home of the modern, innovative school expedition, where a sustainable, ethical approach guarantees unique experiences and a life enhancing adventure.



Our school trips and educational tours are all about maximising the learning opportunities of travel. It's all here, the humble school tour has just come of age.



Adventures, holidays and cultural journeys for teachers looking to 'Escape the Classroom' and discover more about our amazing world, its people and places.



"I am being completely serious when I say that I won't ever run a school trip without you guys. I trust you and your team completely - and the in-country staff that you carefully cultivate and train are a cut above the rest."

Teacher feedback, King's High Warwick

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