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## PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT ESCAPE

DR. PETER BLOCH & Doctors-on-Tour present a

# CME, ECO & CULTURAL TOUR OF SRI LANKA

OCTOBER 24 – NOVEMBER 10, 2024



## The Organizers...

### Doctors-on-Tour

**Doctors-on-Tour** was created in 2000 and specializes in offering ecological, cultural, gastronomical and adventure travel to exotic destinations for physicians who want to combine learning and travelling. Our programs offer targeted educational programs offering updates on current topics of interest together with meetings and discussions with local health care representatives to specifically discuss common medical developments in, and challenges facing, the local health care systems in both Canada and the country where the meetings and discussions are being located. This also includes in-depth tours of hospital facilities (both public and private) in order to meet with local medical practitioners and review, and compare, facilities, techniques and practices on a firsthand basis. We offer programs in several worldwide locations including to such diverse and intriguing areas as **South America (Brazil, Chile/Argentina, Ecuador/Peru); Africa (Kenya/Tanzania, Morocco, South Africa, Zanzibar, Kilimanjaro climb); India, Bhutan, China, Japan, South East Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos & Bali), Malaysia/Singapore, Sri Lanka; New Zealand and Europe (Eastern Europe, Iceland, Spain).**

Additional information, including detailed program brochures downloadable in pdf format and recent testimonials, can be found at [www.doctorsontour.ca](http://www.doctorsontour.ca). The company is a licensed retail travel organization under The Travel Industry Act of Ontario thereby affording complete protection of all monies paid prior to departure. (TICO registration no. 50009110).

Contact us at - tel: 416-231-8466; toll free: 1-855-DOC-TOUR (362-8687); fax: 1-888-612-1459  
e: [info@doctorsontour.ca](mailto:info@doctorsontour.ca)

**Dr. Peter Bloch, M.D. - Oakville, On.**

**Dr. Peter Bloch** lived in Chile for 20 years, having started medical school there, but completed his training at Western. He has been a Family Physician in Oakville since 1976 (recently retired) and is an avid world traveller, including, with his wife Mary, his spirited hosting of several extremely successful CME cultural and ecological tours with Doctors-on-Tour since 2005 including Chile, Argentina, Vietnam & Cambodia, Ecuador & the Galapagos, Peru, Northern and Southern India, Kenya & Tanzania, Brazil, Spain & Portugal, South Africa, New Zealand, China, Bhutan, Malaysia & Singapore, Iceland, Morocco and Japan.

Dr. Bloch may be contacted at -

tel: (289) 242-2752, e: [78pbloch@gmail.com](mailto:78pbloch@gmail.com)



## The Destination... SRI LANKA - The Pearl of the Indian Ocean...

Sri Lanka is a beautiful island country in the Indian Ocean, formerly (from its days under British rule) called Ceylon. It is a tropical nation and has a multi-cultural society with very hospitable people. For centuries, travellers have been drawn here to soak in its natural beauty and discover its ancient treasures and thriving Buddhist culture and, with eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites, plus many ancient cities and old towns showcasing the remarkable achievements of the early Sinhalese civilization, the country offers a deep, rich history. Its geographical position at one of the most important staging posts of Indian Ocean trade laid it open to a uniquely wide range of influences. Generations of Arab, Malay, Portuguese, Dutch and British settlers subtly transformed its culture, architecture, and cuisine.

But there is so much more to Sri Lanka than history and culture - it offers a wonderful selection of pristine beaches with the aquamarine waters of the Indian Ocean, magnificent landscapes featuring lazy lagoons, fertile wetlands, ecologically wondrous types of forest, imposing mountains, bounteous rivers and waterfalls and an abundance of wildlife - much of it with national parks to explore where you'll find yourself amid elephants, leopards, water buffalo and an array of birds and primates flourishing in their natural habitat. Add to this, a vibrant culture including fine arts and crafts and grand festivals, and a people of diverse ethnicity and religious persuasion, charming and hospitable.

This is Sri Lanka!

Our tailored 2 week itinerary takes you across the South Asian nation to showcase its most famous natural and historical sites.

Fly into the country's capital, **Colombo**, and head to the coast for a couple of days at a resort, complete with Ayurvedic spa sat on the Indian Ocean.

Then you're off to **Dambulla** which boasts Sri Lanka's most impressive cave temple, dating back from the 1st century B.C. and containing 150 images of the Buddha and bodhisattvas carved across the walls of its five caves. Head on to Polonnaruwa to explore hundreds of temple ruins and tombs spread out across an ancient royal city. Also, from your Dambulla base, you will be able to visit the massive rock of Sigiriya (Lion's Rock), the country's most iconic site rising out of the misty forests and featuring a massive plateau adorned with ancient ruins. During your Dambulla stay, you'll also experience the first of your wildlife encounters with a safari drive in one of the country's many national parks, Minneriya.

Continue on to **Kandy**, where you'll get a taste for ordinary Sri Lankan life. The city combines urban bustle with ancient Buddhist relics, chief among Kandy's landmarks being the sacred Temple of the Tooth, which holds a tooth of the Lord Buddha himself and is also one of the best locations to witness a cultural dance performance - one of the defining experiences of a stay in Kandy.

Next, you're boarding a train to take a spectacular journey south through the central highlands and tea plantations to

the charming lakeside town of **Nuwara Eliya**, dubbed, Sri Lanka's "Little England" due to its numerous colonial bungalows and old school charm. Visit one of the "Great Gardens of the World", Peradeniya, take the iconic 'World's End' trail in the Horton Plains National Park, visit a dairy farm and, of course, a tea plantation to see how the island's most famous is cultivated and produced.

En route to **Wellawaya**, a quaint village, east of the central mountains in one of the island's vital rice heartlands and once home to the ancient Sinhalese Kingdom, visit the iconic Demodara Nine Arch Bridge, one of the best examples of British colonial-era railway construction in the country. During your 2 night stay at the island's first agro eco-luxury resort, you will learn about Sri Lanka's farming culture as well as participating in a cooking class to enjoy its traditional local cuisine.

From Wellawaya, continue your journey to the south-east coast and **Yala National Park**, the country's most famous nature reserve, where monkeys, elephants, sloth bears and buffalo roam across a landscape of plains, forests, and lagoons. The park also has the highest density of leopards in the world. Your game drives through Yala are a great way to spot some incredible wildlife.

Pass westward along the coast to **Galle**, an old Dutch trading port that is famous for its colonial buildings, mosques, churches, and mansions and another UNESCO World Heritage Site, Galle is a great place to explore most famous for is 16th century Portuguese Fort - unique for being surrounded by the ocean on three sides. Galle is one of the most charming spots in the entire country and close by to the coastal town of **Mirissa** which has many species of whales that inhabit its waters including one of the highest concentrations in the world of for Blue Whales which you will hopefully see on a **whale watching excursion**.

Close out your Sri Lanka vacation in the capital, **Colombo**, a strategic port city on the East-West sea trade routes for over 2,000 years - a heady admixture of Asian anarchy, colonial charm and modern chic where the old and the new co-exist side by side.

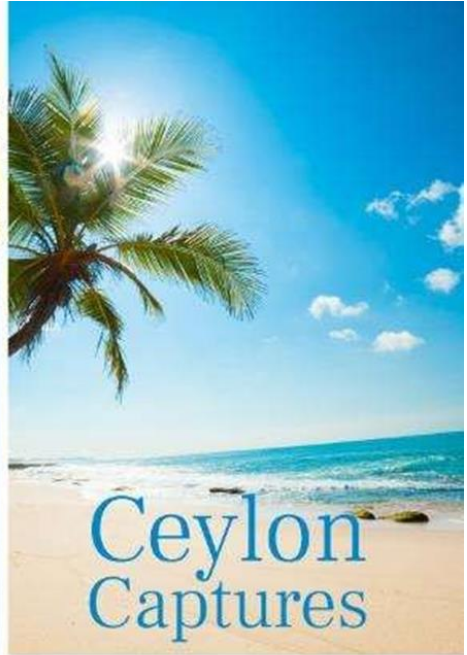
This trip to Sri Lanka promises the best of this incredible South Asian nation.

Additional info can be found at –

- <https://srilanka.travel/> - The official website of Sri Lanka Tourism











## The Academic Program (approximately 15 CME hours) ...

The varied Academic Program on this tour will focus on **Health and Healing** and is suitable for all health care practitioners. In Sri Lanka, the tradition of wellness is deeply interwoven with the natural and cultural essence of the island, offering a holistic, richly diverse approach to health encompassing physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Our program will explore healing strategies in this part of the world with presentations by local practitioners in several of the local healing techniques such as Ayurvedic medicine, *hela vedekama* (traditional Indigenous medicine) and various holistic practices such as therapeutic yoga and meditation. There will be visits to local wellness facilities as well as a hospital visit in Colombo to learn about the local medical system together with Academic Sessions in both Negombo and Yala with presentations by both local and Canadian speakers.

The **detailed program itinerary in this brochure below** provides more information on the various medical facilities that we will be visiting and a high level summary may be found below -

- **Academic Session #1** with a presentation by a local practitioner on Sri Lanka's **Ayurveda medicine** and its interwoven culture and lifestyle (Negombo)
- Visit a wellness sanctuary to learn to meet with a **Indigenous holistic medicine 'hela vedekama'** specialist (Siguriya)
- Learn about the **medicinal properties of various spices** at the Ranweli Spice Garden (Kawudupelella)
- Learn about the **medicinal properties of various plants** at the Royal Botanical Garden Peradeniya (Kandy)
- Visit to an **SOS Children's Village** in Nuwara Eliya
- Learn about the **medicinal properties of various kinds of rice** (Wellawaya)
- **Academic Session #2** with presentations and interactive discussions on current medical topics by Canadian presenters (Yala)
- Visit a **holistic wellness center** to learn about their holistic healthcare practices offering a combination of Ayurveda, osteopathy, acupuncture, yoga and meditation and other healing modalities while still embracing modern healing practices (Netolpitiya)
- Visit to a **local hospital in Colombo** to learn about the Sri Lankan healthcare system and meet with local doctors.

In addition, any physician who would like to make a short presentation at the Academic Conference should register their interest by completing the relevant section of the program registration form and the Group Medical Director, Dr. Peter Bloch, tel: (289) 242-2752, e: [78pbloch@gmail.com](mailto:78pbloch@gmail.com) ) will contact you directly.

A certificate of attendance will be provided to all attendees of the Academic Program.





## Tour highlights...

- Kick back on the sparkling sounds of **Sri Lanka's beaches**
- Climb the indomitable **Siguriya Lion's Rock** and roam around the elaborate gardens and exquisite frescoes in the ancient fortress on the rock's plateau summit
- Walk amongst the ancient palaces and super-sized Buddhas in the **old royal capital of Polonnaruwa**
- Make the pilgrimage to the **Temple of the Tooth Relic** in UNESCO World Heritage listed Kandy
- Experience the various forms of cultural dance of the island at a **Kandyan dance performance**
- Stroll through one of the "Great Gardens of the World" at **Peradeniya Botanical Gardens**
- Relax on a **spectacular train journey** through the tea plantations of the Central Highlands
- Learn about the country's colonial past and visit a tea plantation in **Nuwara Eliya, known as "Little England"**
- Stay in a luxury agro-resort and learn about **ancient farming techniques** in the island's rice heartland
- Search for crocodiles, elephants, monkeys and the ever-elusive leopards in the foliage of **Yala National Park**
- Marvel at the **stilt fishermen of Weligama**
- Look through a window into the **Dutch colonial past in historic Galle**
- Search for **blue (and other...) whales in Mirissa** - one of the whale watching capitals of the world
- Immerse yourself in the ancient and modern cultures of the country's capital, **Colombo**
- Hagggle for that unique souvenir in one of the island's many **markets and bazaars**



## The Itinerary...

### DAY 1 – Oct 24 (Thursday): Depart Toronto

Depart Toronto for your flight to Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Specific flight times / routing will be forwarded upon registration.

### DAY 2 – Oct 25: In transit as you cross the international dateline

### DAY 3 – Oct 26: Arrive Colombo - Negombo (D)

**Negombo** is a coastal town about 30 kilometers north of Sri Lanka's capital Colombo. It has a decidedly cosmopolitan history with the town being one of the first to be taken by the Portuguese and the area remains a stronghold of Christian Sri Lanka, often being known as "Little Rome" due to its many imposing churches and florid wayside Catholic shrines scattered about the town as well as for having a predominantly Roman-Catholic population.

The Dutch transformed Negombo into an important commercial centre, building a canal (and a fort to guard it) on which spices – particularly the valuable cinnamon which grew profusely in the surrounding areas – were transported from the interior to the coast prior to being shipped abroad. Nowadays much of the town's economy revolves around tourism, although fishing also remains vitally important, with the sea providing plentiful supplies of tuna, shark and seer, while the Negombo lagoon, backing the town, is the source of some of the island's finest prawns, crabs and lobster.

The people of Negombo are **Karavas**, Tamil and Sinhalese fishermen who converted en masse to Catholicism during the mid-sixteenth century under the influence of Portuguese missionaries, taking Portuguese surnames and becoming the first of Sri Lanka's innumerable de Silvas, de Soysas and Pereras. The Karavas are also famous for their unusual fishing boats, known as oruwas, distinctive catamarans (a word derived from the Tamil ketti-maran) fashioned from a hollowed-out trunk attached to an massive sail. Hundreds of these small vessels remain in use even today and make an unforgettable sight when the fleet returns to shore.



Morning arrival in Colombo, the capital city of Sri Lanka, where you will be met by your local tour escort from our tour operator partner in Sri Lanka who will be with you for the duration of your tour of the island.

Your first 2 days will be spent just outside of the city of **Negombo** with your hotel nestled between the magnificent Negombo Lagoon on one side, and the vast Indian Ocean on the other.

During the short transfer from the airport, your tour escort will provide you with some information about your hotel, its surrounding as well as explaining your program for the following days. You will have free time today to recuperate from your transatlantic flights.

Welcome dinner and overnight at the hotel.



**DAY 4 – Oct 27: Negombo (B, L)**

Breakfast at the resort.

**Physicians - Morning medical program at the hotel (Jetwing Lagoon) with a presentation by a local practitioner on Sri Lanka's indigenous Ayurveda medicine and its interwoven culture and lifestyle.**



**Ayurveda** in Sri Lanka, a system with roots stretching back over 5,000 years, emphasizes the balance of a unique combination of elements and energies known as doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Treatments under Ayurveda are preventive as well as curative, focusing on revitalizing the mind, body, and soul.

The use of herbal medicines prepared from plant-based raw materials, alongside treatments like panchakarma, aims to detoxify the body. Modern Ayurveda practices a variety of treatments to address diverse ailments ranging from cardiac diseases to dermatological issues and arthritis, using both ancient wisdom and modern techniques to ensure efficacy and safety.

**Non-physician partners** will have leisure time at the resort. Lunch at the resort.

This afternoon, take a **city tour of Negombo** which includes St. Mary's Church, one of the largest cathedrals in Sri Lanka, the Dutch Fort (actually built by the Portuguese) and the Dutch Clock tower and Windmill.

You will also see **Angurukaramulla Temple**, known for the dragonhead that guards its entrance and its six-metre-tall statue of Lord Buddha. To enter, visitors walk through the maw of the dragon, who is said to ward evil spirits away from the temple and its devotees.



Evening at leisure. Overnight at resort in Negombo.

**DAY 5 – Oct 28: Negombo - Dambulla (B, L)**

At the heart of the Cultural Triangle, the thriving market town of **Dambulla** is most famous for the largest and best-preserved cave temple complex of Sri Lanka. Dambulla's cave temples are cut out of an enormous granite outcrop that rises more than 160m above the surrounding countryside and offers majestic views across the plains of the dry zone as far as Sigiriya, 20kms away. Statues and paintings in these caves date back to the 1st century BC with some of them then being repaired and repainted in the 11th, 12th, and 18th centuries. The caves in the city provided refuge to King Valagamba in his 14 year long exile from the Anuradhapura kingdom. The dimly lit grottoes crammed with statues and decorated with some of the finest murals in the country, offer a picture-perfect snapshot of Sinhalese Buddhist art at its finest.

The area is also well known for the Rangiri Dambulla International Cricket Stadium, famous for being built in just 167 days. The city also boasts of having the largest rose quartz mountain range in South Asia, and the Iron wood forest, or Namal Uyana Conservation Forest. The Ibbankatuwa prehistoric burial site near the Dambulla cave temple complexes is the latest archaeological site of significant historical importance found in Dambulla, which is located within 3 kilometers of the cave temples providing evidence on presence of indigenous civilisations long before the arrival of Indian influence on the Island nation.

The town is also a good base for travelling to some of the country's major cultural sites, Sigiriya Lion's Rock Fortress and the Polonnaruwa Ancient ruins, as well as the Minneriya National Park.



Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, leave the coastal scenery of Negombo and head inland to Dambulla.

En route visit **Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage**. The Orphanage was established in 1975 by the Sri Lanka Wildlife in order to give care and protection to the many orphaned elephants found in the jungles of Sri Lanka. A captive breeding program was started in 1982. Since the inception of the program, over 20 elephants have been bred here. Today, there are around 100 elephants. The aim of the orphanage is to simulate a natural habitat for these elephants. The elephants are taken to the river twice a day for a bath and all the babies less than three years of age are still bottle-fed. The main attraction at the orphanage is observing the elephants bathing, which is quite a spectacle. The free movement of the herd within the enclosed land of the orphanage allows the elephants the opportunity to mate. The success story of Pinnawala has drawn the attention of animal activists from all over the world.

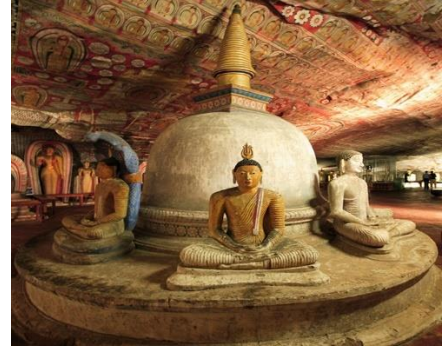




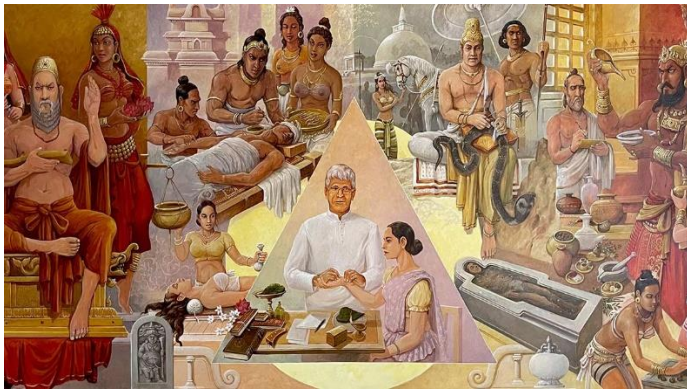
Lunch at a local restaurant in Dambulla.

In the afternoon, visit the **Cave Temple Complex** in Dambulla to explore the paintings depicting the life and preaching of the Ven. Lord Buddha.

*The **Dambulla Cave Temple**, also known as the Golden Temple of Dambulla, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site situated in the central part of the country. It is the largest and best-preserved cave temple complex in Sri Lanka and dated back to the first century BC. The rock stands 160 metres/520 feet over the surrounding plains with more than 80 documented caves. The main ones are five caves, which contain statues and paintings relating to Buddha and his life. Inside the caves, the ceilings are painted with intricate patterns of religious images following the contours of the rock. There are images of the Lord Buddha and bodhisattvas, as well as various gods and goddesses. There are a total of 153 Buddha statues, three statues of Sri Lankan kings and four statues of gods and goddesses. The murals cover a vast area.*



Later, An **Indigenous holistic medicine 'hela vedekama'** specialist will welcome the group to her wellness clinic in Sigiriya and explain the medicinal practices and take the group through the sanctuary property.



**Hela Wedakama** is an indigenous medicine in Sri Lanka formed from a series of prescriptions passed through generations over the last 3,000 years. Ancient kings were also prominent physicians and King Buddhadasa (398AD) was known to be one of the most influential physicians that used these ancient healing methods.

It offers treatments for a variety of conditions using traditional herbal formulas and techniques passed down through generations. This indigenous system is noted for its blend of local herbal knowledge with traditional principles, providing care that is deeply rooted in the natural environment and traditional Sri Lankan culture.

Evening at leisure.

Overnight at hotel in Dambulla.

**DAY 6 – Oct 29: Dambulla - Sigiriya – Hiriwadunna - Dambulla (B, L)**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today, you will have the option of a very early start to take a hike to the **Pidurangala Rock**. Even though **Sigiriya Lion's Rock Fortress**, the highly vocalized rock formation in the area, a hike to Pidurangala especially in the early morning is a truly memorable experience. A climb of around 20-30 minutes to the summit (this is a relatively straightforward combination of natural pathways and some rocky areas but does involve some steep sections and uneven grounds – it does not consist of steps like the climb up Sigiriya Rock later in the day), will be well rewarded with the majestic view of Sigiriya in the distance, picturesque lakes, greenery and land vistas. You can also learn about King Rawana who has claimed to have had connections with aliens and spaceships that has believed to land on this flat rock base of Pidurangala.



Return to your hotel for some time to refresh. Later in the morning, retreat to the peaceful village of **Hiriwadunna** in the Habarana area for some unique local experiences. This rural village is home to approximately 400 families, mostly farmers and artisans. The village is known for its stunning natural beauty, with paddy fields and lakes surrounding it. The village is also home to ancient temples, shrines, and other cultural attractions that glimpse Sri Lanka's rich history.

Start with a scenic walk along the "bund" of a man-made reservoir; enjoy a catamaran ride across the stream line to visit Chena cultivation, followed by a visit to a humble farmer's vegetable corner along with a traditional lunch prepared by the farmer's wife.

Lunch at Hiriwadunna village.





Mid-afternoon, it is time to visit **Sigiriya Lion's Rock**.

**Sigiriya** is an ancient rock fortress and a site of historical and archaeological significance that is dominated by a massive column of rock over 180 metres high amongst an otherwise flat landscape filled with jungle and peppered with small villages. According to historical data, the site was selected by King Kasyapa (477 – 495 AD) for his new capital, The Ancient City of Sigiriya which has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. He built the palace on the top of the rock and decorated its sides with colourful frescoes. On a small plateau about halfway up the side of this rock, he built a gateway in the form of an enormous lion and the name of this place is derived from this structure (Lion Rock) although today only the feet now remain. There are many rock shelters and caves in the vicinity which were occupied by Buddhist monks as early as the 3rd Century BC and the structure was originally used as a monastery but, in the second half of the 5th century, it was turned into a royal residence by King Kasyapa. The rock rises dramatically from the central plains. The near-vertical walls reach up to a flat-topped summit that contains the ruins of an ancient civilization. On the way to the top of a staircase, you pass a series of remarkable frescoes and a pair of colossal lion's paws carved into the bedrock. Protected from the sun in the sheltered gallery, the frescoes remain in remarkably good condition. The exact dates of the impressive frescoes are thought to date back to the 5th Century. Another aspect of Sigiriya is that it is considered one of the most important urban planning sites of the first 1000 years AD. The gardens here are one of the most important aspects of the site as they are among the oldest landscaped gardens in the world. The gardens are divided into water gardens, cave and boulder gardens and terraced gardens.

A moderate level of fitness is required to climb the 1,200 steps to the fortress at the top of Sigiriya which are divided into 3 separate stages – the main gate and water gardens, boulder gardens to Lion's Paw, and Lion's Paw to the top of the citadel.

For those that do not wish to climb to the steps, Sigiriya Museum shows photos of the excavation of Sigiriya, reproductions of the frescoes, examples and translations of some of the graffiti on the Mirror Wall, and artifacts excavated from the site.

Watch a short video of Sigiriya at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQhm\\_08tMLc&t=19s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQhm_08tMLc&t=19s)



The rest of the day at leisure at your hotel.

Overnight at hotel in Dambulla.

**DAY 7 – Oct 30: Dambulla (B, L)**

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, visit the **Polonnaruwa Ancient ruins**, a UNESCO World Heritage site which contains the remains of the royal ancient city of the Kingdom of Polonnaruwa. Kings ruled the central plains of Sri Lanka from Polonnaruwa 800 years ago, when it was a thriving commercial and religious center. The glories of that age can be found in the archaeological treasures that still give a pretty good idea of how the city looked in its heyday. You'll find the archaeological park a delight to explore, with hundreds of ancient structures – tombs and temples, statues and stupas – in a compact core. The Quadrangle alone is worth the trip. Visit the ancient Monastic hospital as well. The archaeological excavations have confirmed this building as a monastic hospital constructed in the 12th century. A medicine trough (*Behet Oruva*) made of stone can still be seen in one room. This medicine trough had been used for treating patients by immersing in herbal oil. Several surgical and medical instruments also have been discovered during the excavations. There are two main sections in this building, namely living and treatment sections. Today the ancient city of Polonnaruwa remains one of the best-planned archaeological relic cities in the country reflecting the dedication and greatness of the Kingdom's first rulers.



Lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon, visit the **Minneriya National Park** for a safari experience.

*Located in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka, the area was designated as a National Park in 1997, having previously been declared a wildlife sanctuary. The nature reserve protects the catchments of 3 ancient irrigation tanks, including the Minneriya Tank, which was built by King Mahasen in the third century AD, and is one of the most important habitats in the region for the long-term conservation of elephants.*

*Due to the topography and vegetation of scrub, forest, and wetlands, Minneriya offers excellent mammal visibility. Elephants are a major attraction year-round, as are a host of other mammals. Among the 35 indigenous species of mammals residing in the park, four are endemic, and ten species are nationally threatened. Keystone species include the majestic elephant, the elusive leopard, and unique Sri Lankan Sloth Bear. Other mammals include Sambar Deer, Spotted Deer, Mouse Deer, Wild Boar, Purple-faced Leaf Monkey, Toque Macaque, Sri Lanka Flame- striped Jungle Squirrel, Grey Langur, three species of mongoose, the porcupine, and the endangered Indian Pangolin.*

*May to October is a popular time to visit the Minneriya National Park due to the famous Elephant Gathering. As the waters of the reservoir recede during the dry season, lush grass is exposed on the banks. Small herds of elephants from surrounding parks travel to Minneriya and gather to form massive herds (sometimes 200 or more). This is a fascinating event, and visitors are often treated to the sight of many hundreds of elephants feeding on the banks.*



Despite its location in the dry zone, Minneriya is rich in birdlife, and is an ideal park for birdwatchers, offering dazzling sights of endemic and migratory birds, depending on the time of year. Minneriya National Park has registered more than 170 species of birds. Exotic migratory waders including the Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper and Kentish Plover can be seen at the edge of the reservoir in winter months. The reservoir is important for large water birds including the Lesser Adjutant, Painted Stork, and Spot-billed Pelican. Endemic species include Ceylon Grey Hornbill, Ceylon Green Pigeon, Ceylon Hanging Parrot, Brown-capped Babbler, Black-capped Bulbul, Ceylon Small Barbet and Ceylon Junglefowl. Vulnerable species such as the Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpecker and the Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo are also found in the park. The park is also home to a host of raptors. A special but common sighting is the aerial acrobatics of White-bellied Sea Eagles, proudly on display as they hunt for their dinner. Minneriya is one of the 70 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of Sri Lanka.

The park is also an important habitat for the conservation of herpetofauna, with over 54 species. Endemic species include the Tammenna Skink, Spotted Supple Skink, Painted-lipped Lizard, and Sri Lankan Kangaroo Lizard. Threatened and rare species include Sarasins' Snake Skink, Rock Python, and Trinket Snake. Mugger Crocodiles, Water Monitor and Land Monitors are among other reptiles which are more easily visible.



Evening at leisure.

Overnight at hotel in Dambulla.

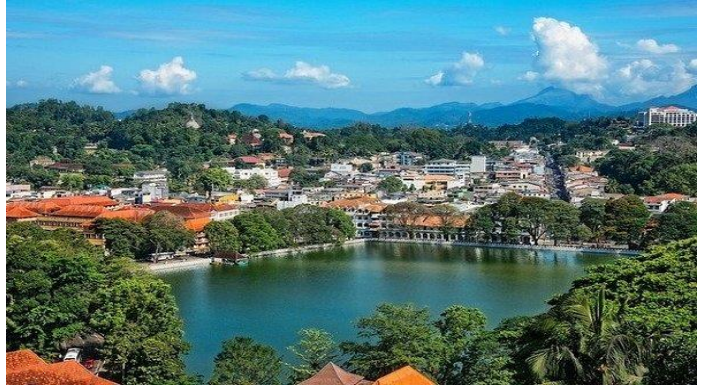
#### DAY 8 – Oct 31: Dambulla – Kandy (B, L)

**Kandy**, the English name for the city of Maha Nuvara, owes its existence to its remote and easily defensible location amid the steep, jungle-swathed hills at the centre of the island. The origins of the city date back to the early thirteenth century, during the period following the collapse of Polonnaruwa, when the Sinhalese people drifted gradually southwards (see *The Sinhalese move south*). During this migration, a short-lived capital was established at Gampola, just south of Kandy, before the ruling dynasty moved on to Kotte, near present-day Colombo. The eighteenth century saw the ushering in of a new Indian Nayakkar dynasty and the development of a distinctively Kandyan style of architecture and dance, a unique synthesis of local Sinhalese traditions and southern Indian styles. The nineteenth century saw the city develop into an important centre of British rule and trade. Post-colonial Kandy has continued to expand, preserving its status as the island's second city despite remaining a modest little place compared to the capital, Colombo.

The city lies in the midst of hills in the Kandy plateau, which crosses an area of tropical plantations, mainly tea and, today, Kandy is both an administrative and religious city, well known as the center of Buddhism. Home to sacred landmarks, beautiful gardens, and diligent cultural delights, Kandy is a countryside hamlet with cool breezes, leafy green landscapes, misty mountains gathered around the lake. It's most famous site, the Temple of the Sacred Tooth, contains the tooth of Buddha (the traditional symbol of Sinhalese sovereignty) smuggled into Sri Lanka by a princess in the 4th Century. It is still carried out in processions which take place each July and August.

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today, continue to the hill capital, Kandy.



En route, visit the **Ranweli Spice Garden** in Kawudupelella which pays homage to the long history of Sri Lankan spices. Herbs and spices play a major role in Sri Lankan cuisine, believed to add flavour to food whilst also boosting healthy compounds that fight inflammation and reduce damage to the body's cells. Herbs are derived from the leaves of a plant, while spices are generally made from its seeds, berries, bark or root.

The garden features a variety of spice plants including turmeric, cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, vanilla and nutmeg trees. The plants are grown in neatly arranged nursery beds using methods that do not harm the environment, and you will **learn about the various medicinal benefits associated with many of the garden's spices.**



Lunch at a local restaurant in Kandy.

After lunch, take a city tour including the marketplace, pollah and the **Temple of the Tooth Relic.**

The **Temple of the Sacred Tooth** is located in the royal palace complex of the former Kingdom of Kandy. According to Sri Lankan legends, when Buddha died in India his body was cremated in a sandalwood pyre and his left canine tooth was retrieved from the funeral pyre by a spiritual practitioner -- Khema who in turn gave it to King Brahmadatte for veneration. The temple houses the relic of the tooth of Buddha and has played an important role in local politics because it is believed that whoever holds the relic holds the governance of the country.

It is Sri Lanka's most important Buddhist relic which is kept in a heavily guarded room. You don't actually get to see the tooth as it is held in a gold casket stupa. It has been housed in different buildings ever since it came to Sri Lanka in the 4th Century AD. It has been in this one since the early 1700s. As well as the main temple, the complex includes a series of smaller temples, shrines and museums. The Royal Palace is situated to the north of the temple.





Today, the Temple is preserved as an archaeological museum. Do not forget to pick some nicely scented flowers and sticks for a few rupees that you can offer to Lord Buddha and light a lamp with coconut oil.

*Please note - ensure you wear proper attire below the knee. Shorts are not allowed in the temple.*

A leisurely stroll down the lanes and by-lanes will give you a feeling of paradise. You can find many seasonal fruits, vegetables, and spices for a small price if you make a visit to Kandy local market. As you walk down the market towards the station, don't forget to check-out the small shops bejeweled with handcraft and wood ornaments.



Witness a **cultural show** to wind up your evening. With elaborate costumes, gyrating dance moves and show-stopping, fire-breathing stunts, a **Kandyan dance performance** is one of the defining experiences of a stay in Kandy featuring the various dance types of Sri Lanka. All genres of dance are accompanied by drumming, which can reach extraordinary heights of virtuosity – even if the finer points pass you by, the headlong onslaught of a Kandyan drum ensemble in full flight leaves few people unmoved. The archetypal Sri Lankan drum is the *geta bera* (literally “boss drum”), a double-headed instrument carried on a strap around the drummer’s waist and played with the hands.

*Geta bera* are made to a fixed length of 67cm, with different types of skins (monkey and cow, for example) at either end of the drum to produce contrasting sounds. The double-headed *daule* drum is shorter but thicker and is played with a stick in one hand and the palm of the other. The *tammiettana bera* is a pair of tiny drums (a bit like bongos) which are tied together and played with a pair of sticks. A *horanava* (a kind of Sri Lankan oboe) is sometimes added to the ensemble, providing a simple melodic accompaniment.

Like the dancers they accompany, Kandyan drummers perform in traditional costume, dressed in a large sarong, a huge red cummerbund, and a white tasselled turban – significant musical points are marked by a toss of the head, sending the tassel flying through the air in a delicate accompanying flourish.

Overnight at hotel in Kandy.

**DAY 9 – Nov 1: Kandy - Nuwara Eliya (B, L)**

**Nuwara Eliya**, meaning the City of Light, is located in the tea country hills of the central province of Sri Lanka. At an altitude of 1868m, this lakeside town is still overlooked by Mount Pidurutalagala, the tallest mountain in Sri Lanka (2,524m) and sits in a picturesque situation on Lake Gregory. It is characterized by its misty and cooling weather, tea estates, numerous lakes, eye catching landscapes, winding roads, and numerous colonial bungalows. Indeed, with its brick and stone-built houses, rose gardens and perfect lawns it has the elegance and old school charm of, and is dubbed, Sri Lanka's "Little England" albeit with a landscape far more dramatic than Britain's. It is considered to be the most important region for tea production in Sri Lanka with terraced tea plantations surround the former hill station.



Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, take a tour of the **Royal Botanical Garden Peradeniya**, a 60-hectare (147 acre) garden which is the largest in Sri Lanka. The gardens are home to a large and diverse variety of plants (over 4,000 plant species) including endemics and species extinct in the wild and several medicinal plants.

The scenic splendor of the garden is highlighted by flourishing growth of huge tropical trees in its arboretum, flower garden with a colourful ribbon border and the Mahawali River that flows around its fringes. Prime attractions within the gardens include the Orchid House with more than 300 varieties of exquisite Orchids blooming in profusion. The memorial collection consists of trees planted by eminent persons including heads of states, state guests, astronauts and royalty during their official visits to the gardens. The Palm collection is among the best in Asia with about 220 species. Other attractions are the great lawn, spice gardens, Palm avenues, plant house and Cacti display, lake and flowering trees.

A medicinal plant specialist will accompany the group and will explain the medicinal properties of each plant.

Watch a short video at <https://www.greatgardensoftheworld.com/gardens/peradeniya-botanic-gardens/>



Afterwards, hop on board the morning train and journey through the **Tea Carpets of Ceylon** to **Nuwara Eliya**.



The slow descent through the tea fields and hill countryside with its winding tracks and misty panoramas, offers an unmatched perspective and wonderful experience.

On a clear day you may enjoy a view of Adams Peak in the distance.



Late lunch at a local restaurant and check into your hotel.

Rest of the day and evening at leisure. Overnight at hotel in Nuwara Eliya.

#### DAY 10 – Nov 2: Nuwara Eliya (B, L)

An early start this morning to visit the **Horton Plains National Park** (a packed breakfast will be arranged from your overnight hotel).

*Perched on the very edge of the hill country midway between Nuwara Eliya and Haputale, **Horton Plains National Park** covers a wild stretch of bleak, high-altitude grassland. The great plains of the Central Highlands of Sri Lanka were discovered by the planter Thomas Farr in the early 19th century and the Horton Plains were discovered by planter Thomas Farr in the beginning of the 19th century and so named as a honor of the governor of Ceylon, Sir Wilmot Horton.*

*Set at an elevation of over 2,100m, Horton Plains are a world apart from the rest of Sri Lanka, the highest plateau of the island and a misty and rainswept landscape whose cool, wet climate has fostered the growth of a unique but fragile ecosystem. The Patnas in the lower parts, rising from the Marshes and streams, extend up to the tree-line where large parts of the Plains are still covered in beautiful and pristine stands of cloudforest, with their distinctive umbrella-shaped keena trees, covered in a fine cobweb of 'Spagnum moss' (or old man's beard), whose leaves turn from green to red to orange as the seasons progress.*

*The jungle is full of rare and endemic plants including the red flowered Rhododendrons, or the 'Niloos', that bloom every 12 years. The park is also one of the best places in the island for birdwatching, and an excellent place to see montane endemics such as the dull-blue flycatcher, Sri Lanka bush warbler, Sri Lanka whistling thrush and the pretty yellow-eared bulbul. From a wildlife perspective, the park's most visible residents are its herds of sambar deer, while you might also see bear-faced (also known as purple-faced) monkeys, wild boar and even a leopard if you are very lucky. Cultivated in the forest among nellu shrubs and keena trees are several spices including pepper, cinnamon and cardamom.*

*The Plains are also one of the island's most important watersheds and the source of the Mahaweli, Kelani and Walawe rivers, three of the island's largest. The plateau comes to a sudden end (the lookouts appropriately called **World's End**) with dramatically plunging cliffs, a magnificent escarpment that dives 880m to the lowlands below. This, and the Plains as a whole, is one of the most photogenic spots in tea country*



In the early morning, take the main trek circular route through the Horton Plains before the clouds descend to see the toy town tea plantation villages in the valley below, and an unhindered view towards the south towards the coast. The path opens with an extensive view of the flora: naked meadow patina here; densely wooded cloud forest out there. Once the meadows have passed, the trek leads through a thin stretch of cloud forest. These clouded forests are huddled away with endemic plants and gushing waterfalls with the iconic **'World's End' viewpoints** being the highlight of the trek.

Lunch is back at your overnight hotel.

This afternoon, visit **Ambewela Farm**, the largest and most prestigious dairy farm in the country. Located in the hill station known as Ambewela (also fondly called 'Little New Zealand') and spanning 150 acres, the farm was started with the help of the New Zealand government in the 1960's. It produces milk, yoghurt, cream, and cheese and is well-known across the island for its dairy products, even having its own line of products being sold all around the country at various markets. You may see the milking stations of the dairy cows and see the calves in the nursery. Drink a fresh glass of milk at the cafe station up the hill and maybe buy some cheese to eat.



Later in the afternoon, visit the **SOS Children's Village in Bambarakelle**, close to Nuwara Eliya. This was the second SOS Children's Village to be set up in Sri Lanka being inaugurated in April 1984. In 1983, the country had faced a difficult situation, with ongoing hostility between the two main communities (Sinhalese and Tamil) and the village project was able to bring children of these two communities together as one family where a total of ten families, six Sinhala and four Tamil were established and a strong and united SOS Family was developed setting an example as to how the two communities could live as one with understanding and peace. After two decades, today more than 227 children, both Sinhala and Tamil, have integrated into society and are leading independent lives. Family strengthening efforts in the community focus on educational assistance and employability training.

Five mothers who were the first group of mothers are now retired from active service as SOS Mothers and are living in the Mothers' Retirement Home in Nuwara Eliya. An SOS Kindergarten, SOS Youth Facilities for Boys and Girls and FSP Programmes are the other ancillary projects in Nuwara Eliya.

SOS Children's Villages is the world's largest private child welfare organization operating 400 villages in 131 countries. They provide needy children with stable homes and the prospect of an independent future. Every child lives in a 'family' house of up to eight children with trained local women serving as 'mothers' such that they may enjoy the love and security that living as a family brings.



For tour participants that may wish to donate, SOS suggests stationary items (eg pens/pencils, markers, erasers) as well as educational material (books) for their children (Children at SOS are from ages 2-18).

[https://www.soschildrensvillages.lk/where-we-work/sos-children-s-village-nuwaraeliya-\(2\)](https://www.soschildrensvillages.lk/where-we-work/sos-children-s-village-nuwaraeliya-(2))



Evening at leisure.

Overnight at hotel in Nuwara Eliya.

#### DAY 11 – Nov 3: Nuwara Eliya – Wellawaya (B, L, D)

**Wellawaya** is a quaint village, east of the central mountains and one of the island's vital rice heartlands, with vast paddy fields and irrigation canals stretching to the foothills of the mountains on the horizon. Paddy is the lifeblood of Sri Lanka, and its vast irrigation system - one of the most admired engineering feats of the ancient world – were created to sustain the crop. In Wellawaya, life revolves around farming, and you will be able to observe timeless customs and rituals associated with sowing and harvesting, the techniques used - an amalgamation of modern and ancient - and learn about the ecosystems that have developed around the island's ancient paddy practices.

*The region boasts of an ancient history and has harbored civilization for thousands of years and is rich in archaeological and historical sites awaiting discovery and incredible biodiversity around every corner.*

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, visit the **Pedro Tea Estate** tea factory where the process of tea producing and grading will be explained. Established in 1885, the factory is still filled with the cranky machinery of the 19th century. Take a 20-minute guided tour of the factory, originally built in 1885 and still packed with 19th-century engineering, where you will be taken through the entire manufacturing process, from grading to packaging. Finish off with a tasting of a cup of pure Ceylon tea. This spot is also where the first tea bushes were planted by James Taylor, giving a start to the line of Ceylon tea that followed.

Tea is a huge industry in Sri Lanka. **Ceylon Tea** is world famous for its taste, quality and health benefits. Women of various ages act as tea pluckers with their baskets and bags plucking tea leaves from the plantations. The key is to pluck the right tea leaves with the correct properties. These tea leaves are then taken into the factories where the selection process starts. The fresh and best leaves are put into the machines for the processing. The rolling, withering, processing is all done with the help of the machines and a lot of helping hands gather around to do the packaging and storing activities as well.



Afterwards, leave for Wellawaya, the dry plains that were once home to ancient Sinhalese Kingdom.

En route witness the **Ravana Ella Waterfall** and the iconic **Demodara Nine Arch Bridge** - The Nine Arch Bridge also called the Bridge in the Sky, is a viaduct bridge in Sri Lanka. It is one of most iconic bridges in Sri Lanka and the best examples of British colonial-era railway construction in the country.



Lunch at your eco resort in Wellawaya.

Located in the charming village of Wellawaya, at the foothills of the magnificent Poonagala mountain range, is **Jetwing Kaduruketha** - the island's first agro eco-luxury resort. Modeled after a traditional village home, Kaduruketha offers guests a tranquil respite complemented with rustic comforts, picture perfect views and a wealth of unique experiences. The architects have combined bamboo and wood to provide natural ventilation. For bird watching enthusiasts, the village boasts 120 species of birds within its resident environment.

For centuries, agriculture has shaped the way of life for civilizations across Sri Lanka. Villages such as Kaduruketha were home to farmers who inspired a lifestyle filled with simple luxuries. Farmers were also held in high regard for their service to these traditional lands, once thriving with a culture that truly represents the heart of Sri Lankan hospitality.

The cultivation of rice in Sri Lanka traces its roots to Anuradhpura – the first capital of the island nation. Since then, paddy cultivation flourished across the island and became a way of life which sustained millions of people, weaving together society, culture and religion. Surrounded by beautiful green paddy fields and sparkling streams, the 50 acres of land surrounding Kaduruketha is shared with 31 local farming families. Get up close and personal with one of the family's senior farmers as he shares the lesser-known facts about his lifestyle, traditional agricultural methods and cultural practices surrounding his life.

Afternoon at leisure to enjoy the rustic charm and stylish simplicity of this unique eco-luxury resort. Surrounded by village life and Sri Lanka's farming culture, this property, modelled after a traditional village home, is ideal for an eco-retreat.



Dinner at your eco resort in Wellawaya.

Kaduruketha is set amidst acres of paddy fields and lush riverine forests bordering Kirindi Oya (river), creating many diverse habitats within the property. And so, the property is rich in biodiversity and is a haven for a variety of endemic birds and animals. In the evening, engage in a **Night Walk** to spot a variety of animals such as owls, frogs and a plethora of insects in their nocturnal habits, accompanied by the resort's resident naturalist, who will be sure to pique your interest with fascinating facts about these enthralling creatures.



Overnight at resort in Wellawaya.

#### DAY 12 – Nov 4: Wellawaya (B, L, D)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Wake up refreshed to the cool breeze sweeping over the paddy fields and the cries of the resident peacocks outside your own private dwellings.

Start your morning with a walk through paddy fields with the resident naturalist, where the naturalist will explain about the methods of rice paddy cultivation as well as the medicinal properties of various kinds of rice grown at the property. The serenity of nature, the cool morning breeze, the chirping of birds and the warm smiles of farmers will make a memorable, and educational, stroll.

*Rice is such an important food in some countries that "to eat" means "to eat rice." Nearly half of the people in the world get approximately 50% of their calories from rice. Without rice, or something to take the place of rice, many people would go hungry. However, there are many different kinds of rice (white rice, brown rice, black ("forbidden") rice...), each with their own specific health benefits and you will learn about some of these that are harvested, and eaten, in Sri Lanka*

Enjoy an authentic Sri Lankan breakfast with pol roti (traditional flat bread made with fresh coconut and flour), milk rice and lunu miris. Later, pick fresh vegetables and other local produce from Kaduruketha organic garden, dig deep into the island nation's complex culinary traditions, and learn how to cook like a local as the Chef takes you through the secrets of preparing local favourites. Then indulge in the healthy and traditional lunch you have helped to prepare.



Afternoon at leisure to continue to enjoy your eco-resort which includes a large pool, in-house library and Ayurvedic spa treatments.

Dinner and overnight at your resort in Wellawaya.

#### DAY 13 – Nov 5: Wellawaya - Yala National Park (B, L, D)

**Yala National Park**, straddling both the Southern Province and Uva Province, covers a vast 1259 sq. km, although four-fifths of this is designated a Strict Natural Reserve and closed to visitors. On the far side of the Strict Natural Reserve is Yala East National Park, which is only accessible via Arugam Bay. It is the second largest national park in Sri Lanka and is rightfully the heartland of wildlife in the country. With a unique combination of scrub, light forest, grassy plains and brackish lagoons, Yala was designated as a wildlife sanctuary in 1900, and along with Wilpattu was one of the first two national parks in Sri Lanka, having been designated in 1938.

Yala hosts a variety of ecosystems ranging from moist monsoon forests to freshwater and marine wetlands. The number of mammals that have been recorded from the park is 44, and it is one of the best places to spot Sri Lanka's leopards as it has one of the highest densities of these elusive animals in the world. It is also home to Asian elephants, buffalos, sambar and spotted deer, wild boar, wild buffaloes, macaque and langur monkeys, sloth bears, jackals, mongooses, pangolins, porcupines, anteaters, rabbits and wild cats, as well as plentiful crocodiles.

As one of the 70 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Sri Lanka, Yala also offers outstanding birdwatching year-round, and from October to March visitors have the added bonus of seeing thousands of migratory species arrive to escape the northern winter. Over 200 species have been recorded here including 7 which are endemic to Sri Lanka: the Sri Lankan grey hornbill, black-capped bulbul, junglefowl, crimson-fronted barbet, blue-tailed bee-eater, Sri Lanka wood pigeon, and the brown-capped babbler. Peacocks are ubiquitous throughout the park, while you may also spot at least a couple of Sri Lanka jungle fowl also unique to the country - a singularly inelegant, waddling creature, like a feral hen, which has been adopted as the national bird of Sri Lanka.

In addition, the area around Yala has hosted several ancient civilizations with two important pilgrim sites, Sithulpahuwa and Magul Vihara, being situated within the park which provides the visitor with a truly unique experience of human history and nature.

Breakfast at the resort.

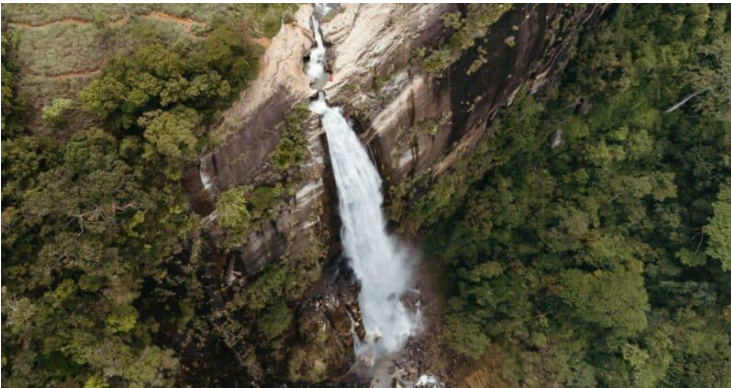
After breakfast, descend to the jungles of Yala with a stop at the **Diyaluma waterfalls** en route.

Diyaluma Falls is 220m high and the second highest waterfall in Sri Lanka. The falls are formed by Punagala Oya, a



tributary of Kuda Oya which in turn, is a tributary of Kirindi Oya.

In Sinhalese, Diyaluma means "rapid flow of water" or may be translated as "liquid light". According to Sri Lankan history, Diyaluma is the setting of the folklore about a tragedy involving a young chieftain who had been banished to the highlands and the attempt by his betrothed to join. As all the passes were guarded, the young man let down a rope of twisted creepers over the escarpment, and as he was hauled up, he was dashed against the rocks and died. The Gods moved to pity by the harrowing spectacle, caused a stream of water to gush from the mountain and veil all evidence of the tragedy in a watery light, hence the term Diyaluma.



Lunch at your Yala hotel.

This afternoon, experience an afternoon jeep safari in Yala, Sri Lanka's most famous national park, accompanied by a naturalist guide.



Dinner and overnight at your hotel in Yala.

## DAY 14 – Nov 6: Yala National Park (B, L, D)

This morning, start off with an early morning wakeup call for your **morning game drive** that will allow you to take in the wild splendour and to search for big game amidst this amazing panorama. Being up at dawn, driving into the park as the morning sun illuminates the landscape in front of you, cruising slowly along the roads hoping to see a leopard draped casually over the branch of a big tree, is one of the world's greatest wildlife experiences.



Upon returning to the hotel, a hearty breakfast will be served. Free time the rest of the morning to enjoy the facilities of your hotel that is situated on the ocean adjacent to the National Park before lunch at your hotel. The hotel's facilities include a large pool and spa.

Lunch at the hotel.

**Physicians – Afternoon Academic program at the hotel.**

**Presentations and interactive discussions on current medical topics by Canadian presenters.**

**Non-physician partners** will continue to have leisure time at the resort.

Later in the afternoon, you will learn about **coconut treacle making**. Visit a remote village home to witness the mysteries of toddy tapping, which is what the locals call the extraction of palm sap from the coconut flower. Step inside a clay hut and assist a local villager in refining the sap in its transformation to what is called "*palm treacle*", a thick brown syrup used as a sweetener in numerous local desserts. Conclude your experience by relishing a pot of curd with the treacle you helped make or with a traditional sweet freshly assembled for you.



Dinner and overnight at your resort in Yala.



## DAY 15 – Nov 7: Yala - Galle (B, L)

*Perched on the coast close to the island's southernmost point, the venerable port of **Galle** (pronounced "Gaul") has grown from ancient origins into Sri Lanka's fourth largest city.*

*At the heart of the city – but strangely detached from it – lies the old Dutch quarter, known as the **Galle Fort**, Sri Lanka at its most magically time-warped – its best-preserved colonial townscape, enclosed within a chain of huge bastions which now guard the area from modernization as effectively as they once protected Dutch trading interests from marauding adventurers. Also known as the Dutch Fort or the "Ramparts of Galle", is a historical, archaeological and architectural heritage monument, which even after more than 423 years maintains a polished appearance, due to extensive reconstruction work done by Archaeological Department of Sri Lanka. Galle lighthouse, Galle clock tower, Groote Kerk - Galle, All Saints' Church - Galle, National Museum in Galle, Old Dutch Hospital, National Maritime Museum Galle are main archaeological and architectural heritage monuments in Galle Fort.*

*Galle is thought to have been the Biblical Tarshish, from whence King Solomon obtained gold, spices, ivory, apes and peacocks, and the combination of its fine natural harbour and strategic position on the sea routes between Arabia, India and Southeast Asia made the town an important trading emporium long before the arrival of the Europeans. In 1589, the Portuguese established a presence here, constructing a small fort named Santa Cruz, which they later extended with a series of bastions and walls. The Dutch captured Galle in 1640 after a four-day siege, and in 1663 expanded the original Portuguese fortifications to enclose the whole of Galle's sea-facing promontory, establishing the street plan and system of bastions which survive to this day, as well as introducing marvels of European engineering such as an intricate subterranean sewer system which was flushed out daily by the tide and is still in use today.*

*The British took Galle in 1796 during the island wide transfer of power following Dutch defeat in the Napoleonic Wars – ironically, after all the ingenuity and labour they had invested in the town's defences, Galle was finally surrendered with hardly a shot being fired. The city continued to serve as Ceylon's principal harbour for much of the nineteenth century but Colombo's growing commercial importance and improvements to its harbour gradually eroded Galle's trade. By the early twentieth century, Galle had become an economic backwater, lapsing into a tranquil decline which happily, if fortuitously, allowed the old colonial townscape of the Fort to survive almost completely intact.*

*With this colorful history, today the fort has a multi-ethnic and multi-religious population. The Sri Lankan government and many Dutch people who still own some of the properties inside the fort are looking at making this one of the modern wonders of the world. The heritage value of the fort has been recognized by the UNESCO and the site has been inscribed as a cultural heritage UNESCO World Heritage Site under criteria IV, for its unique exposition of "an urban ensemble which illustrates the interaction of European architecture and South Asian traditions from the 16th to the 19th centuries."*

*The main pleasure here is just ambling around the atmospheric old streets and walls, savouring the easy pace of life and the refreshing absence of traffic – it feels like being transported straight back to Europe, or to the dilapidated grandeur of Havana in Cuba. Its old-world charm rewards the traveller who takes the time to stroll its winding roads, which are in turn packed with boutique shops. A tiny gem.*



Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, drive southward towards the Southern Coast of the island to Galle. Galle is the country's oldest living city and is sure to capture your interest, with its historic sites and its unique fusion of European and Arabic cultural and architectural influences.

En route, visit the **Sen Wellness Sanctuary**, in the coastal town of Netolpitiya, a wellness center where a wellness guru will provide information regarding their holistic healthcare method offering a combination of Ayurveda, osteopathy, acupuncture, yoga and meditation and other healing modalities while still embracing modern healing practices to provide the patient with a fully rounded, healing journey.

<https://www.senwellnesssanctuary.com/>



Sam Kankanamge founded the Sen Wellness Clinic in London, England in 2007 and after several years of a successful practice treating patients in London, Sam decided to return to the Ayurvedic traditions of his birthplace in southern Sri Lanka and build a sanctuary dedicated to holistic healing and nourishment to realize his vision of **combining his experience working in the West with his Sri Lankan heritage, rooted in Ayurveda traditions.**



Stop for lunch at a local restaurant before continuing towards the Southern Coast and witnessing the curious features of the **Stilt fishermen of Weligama** who carefully balance themselves before casting their fishing lines. The practice started during World War II when food shortages and overcrowded fishing spots prompted some clever men to try fishing on the water. At first, they used the wreckage of capsized ships and downed aircraft, then began erecting their stilts in coral reefs. Two generations of fishermen have eked out this physically demanding existence at dawn and dusk along a 30-kilometer stretch of southern shore between the towns of Unawatuna and Weligama.

Check in to your beach stay hotel, Jetwing Lighthouse; one of the most iconic masterpieces designed by renowned architect **Geoffrey Bawa** and located upon a hillock overlooking the vast Indian Ocean. Take a hotel tour with the general manager of the hotel who will explain the architectural significance of the Geoffrey Bawa hotel.

**Geoffrey Bawa** (1919–2003) was a renowned Sri Lankan architect and one of the most influential figures in tropical modernist architecture. His work seamlessly blended traditional Sri Lankan design elements with modernist principles, creating a unique architectural language that resonates with the local context. Bawa's architectural philosophy emphasized the integration of buildings with their natural surroundings. He believed in creating spaces that harmonized with the landscape, climate, and culture. His designs often featured open courtyards, verandas, and lush gardens, blurring the boundaries between indoors and outdoors.

The arrival of tourism on the island in the 1960s brought with it the need for more modern hotels, a genre with which Bawa became inextricably associated of which the Lighthouse in Galle became one of his most notable. He also received several major public commissions including the mammoth new Sri Lankan Parliament building in Kotte. Bawa's architectural practice became the largest on the island during the 1970s, and most of Sri Lanka's finest young architects started their careers working for him. Many took his influence with them when they left, and buildings (hotels especially) all over the island continue to show the trappings of the Bawa style, executed with varying degrees of competence and imagination.

Evening at leisure. Overnight at hotel in Galle.



## DAY 16 – Nov 8: Galle (B)

Today, take an early morning **whale watching excursion** from the coastal town of Mirissa, close to Galle (you will be provided with a breakfast box from the hotel). Whale watching remains a year around leisure activity in Sri Lanka with several species of whale present including the Bryde's Whale, Fin Whale, Sperm Whale and Blue Whale.

The Blue Whale is the world's largest living creature weighing up to 160 tonnes and reaching 30m in length and gets its name from its mottled blue-grey colouration. It has a broad, flat, U-shaped head with a central ridge running from the blowhole to the tip of the snout. In close encounters the sheer size is magnificent with the tail flukes alone spanning up to 6m.



Specifically, the waters off the coast of Mirissa have one of the highest concentrations in the world of Blue Whales with the continental shelf along the southern coast being very narrow and so the deep waters where blue whales reside can be accessed quickly and easily. You may also spot dolphins in this area.



In the afternoon, explore the **Galle Fort**, first built in 1588 by the Portuguese and extensively fortified by the Dutch during the 17th Century. It is a historical, archaeological and architectural heritage monument as well as being a UNESCO World Heritage site as the largest remaining fortress in Asia built by European occupiers. Some of the sites at the fort include the Old Gate with the British Coat-of-Arms, the Old Dutch Hospital, the ramparts which give excellent views of the Indian Ocean, a clock tower built in 1882 and a lighthouse built in 1939. Today, the Fort remains a hive of activity and is one of the few World Heritage listed sites in which a bustling population continues to thrive.

Walk through the alleys lined with stores and restaurants. After you have explored the city, you could proceed to do some shopping in the very heart of Galle, where you will come across shops with fine variety of gems and jewelries, antiques, art galleries and design stores, etc.

From the lighthouse it's possible to walk clockwise around the top of the ramparts all the way to the main town-facing bastions – a good way to get oriented and an enjoyable stroll at any time of day but particularly at sunset, when half the town seems to take to the bastions to fly kites, play cricket or simply shoot the breeze.



In the evening, Visit the **Sea Turtle Hatchery** in Hikkaduwa.

*Situated a few kilometres north of the main Hikkaduwa town lies the **Sea Turtle Hatchery and Rescue Centre**, a centre with the aim of conserving some of the endangered species of turtles in the world and one of several turtle hatcheries in the southern coast of the island. Initially starting as a community project to help protect the biodiversity of the southern coast, it is now a fully-fledged hatchery and rescue centre with dedicated teams that work round the clock to study, care for and protect several turtle species.*

*Presently, there are five species of turtles that are taken care of in the hatchery and rescue centre. Such species are the Olive Ridley Turtle, Leatherback Turtle, Loggerhead Turtle, Hawksbill Turtle, and Green Turtle. The facilities of the sea turtle hatchery and rescue centre are all state-of-the-art, complete with water tanks to care for newborn turtles, along with adult turtle species that have been rescued from the sea due to injuries. One of the more peculiar sights in the centre is the area in which the turtles lay their eggs, as they have distinct little mounds of sand piled neatly between one another. Each of these mounds is monitored closely to calculate the hatching process of the turtle eggs.*



Overnight at hotel in Galle.



**DAY 17 – Nov 9: Galle - Colombo (B, D)**

The name "**Colombo**", first introduced by the Portuguese in 1505, is believed to be derived from the classical Sinhalese name Kolon thota, meaning "port on the river Kelani". It has also been suggested that the name may be derived from the Sinhalese name Kola-amba-thota which means "Harbour with leafy mango trees". Due to its large harbour and its strategic position along the East-West sea trade routes, Colombo was known to ancient traders as a strategic port city 2,000 years ago. However, it was only made the capital of the island when Sri Lanka was ceded to the British Empire in 1815, and its status as capital was retained when the nation became independent in 1948. In 1978, when administrative functions were moved to Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, Colombo was designated as the commercial capital of Sri Lanka.

Most of the remnants found in Colombo today are the legacy of the British, Dutch & Portuguese and Colombo has a fascination of its own and its history is reflected in the colonial architecture, food, clothing, language, and attitudes found throughout the city. While the Portuguese and Dutch primarily used Colombo as a military fort, the British set Colombo on its way to major development, constructing houses and other various structures. Nearly every visitor to Sri Lanka begins or ends their stay here. More than anywhere else in the country it's a city where the old and new co-exist - shiny office blocks rub shoulders with tumbledown local cafés and shops, while serene Buddhist shrines and colonial churches stand next to the garishly multicoloured towers of Hindu temples, flashy western fashions & traditional sarongs, supermarkets & street bazaars, speedy sports cars & one-man rickshaws – all evidence of the rich stew of races and religions that have gone into the making of this surprisingly cosmopolitan city.

Here you will find what makes contemporary Sri Lanka tick –the city musters few specific sights but offers plenty of atmosphere and quirky character - a heady admixture of Asian anarchy, colonial charm and modern chic. And for sheer adrenaline, a walk through the crowded bazaars of the Pettah or a high-speed rickshaw ride amid the kamikaze traffic of the Galle Road have no rival anywhere else in the country.



Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, depart for the country's capital, Colombo.

En route visit **Ariyapala mask factory** in Ambalangoda.

The art of Sri Lankan Masks has existed from time immemorial. Mask carving is a local tradition in the southern coastal region in Sri Lanka and Ambalangoda is well known for traditional masks carvings and masks dancing. The history of this tradition dates back for many centuries and has developed into perfection in the hand of the Wijesooriya family in Ambalangoda with seven generations of experience of traditional masks carving and Low country dancing and the marks of this family's cultural activities have become a part of Ambalangoda history.

<https://ariyapalamaskmuseum.com/>





Lunch at a local restaurant.

In the afternoon –

**Physicians** – visit a local hospital in Colombo to learn about the Sri Lanka healthcare system and meet with local doctors.



Then join the **non-physician partners** and continue on a Colombo city tour.

Drive along the clean streets edging the crystal white Race Course - horse racing hub in 1893 and World War II airstrip - furnished today with lavish clothing, food & tea boutiques. Visit some of the city's most interesting sites including the old city of Fort and a selection from the city's main temples illustrating the many different faiths present in the country - the Hindu Temple at Sea Street, the Dutch Church at Wolfendal, the historic Davatagaha Mosque and the Seema Malaka Temple on Beira Lake.

Stroll through Pettah, Colombo's busiest and most hectic shopping market - a very colourful market with a Middle Eastern flair. Pettah Bazaar consists of narrow streets filled with an assortment of goods, tuk tuks and men pulling carts filled with a variety of goods. It is a great place to buy local items in bulk and at great prices as well as an ideal place to try some local street food filled with Sri Lankan spices. Each road in Pettah Bazaar is dedicated for a particular type or types of goods such as fabrics, electronics, medical equipment, stationery items, jewellery, bags etc. If time allows, there will also be time for shopping whether it be value for money clothes or impressive antiques on Paradise Road and art the Barefoot Gallery.



Farewell dinner at your hotel in Colombo to relive the memories of your last 2 weeks in Sri Lanka.

Overnight at hotel in Colombo.



**DAY 18 – Nov 10: Colombo - Onward return flight to Toronto (B)**

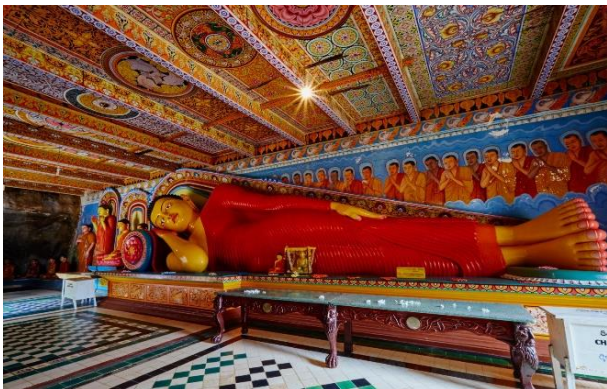
Breakfast at the hotel.

Transfer to the airport for your return flight to Canada.

Specific flight times / routing will be forwarded upon registration.

Arrival back in Toronto on the evening of November 10, 2024.

## Sri Lanka images...





## The hotel bases...

LOCATIONS	HOTELS
Negombo (2N)	Jetwing Blue (4*) <a href="https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingblue/">https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingblue/</a>
Dambulla (3N)	Jetwing Lake (5*) <a href="https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwinglake">https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwinglake</a>
Kandy (1N)	Cinnamon Citadel, Kandy (4*) <a href="https://www.cinnamonhotels.com/cinnamoncitadelkandy">https://www.cinnamonhotels.com/cinnamoncitadelkandy</a>
Nuwara Eliya (2N)	Jetwing St. Andrew's (4*) <a href="https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingstandrews/">https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingstandrews/</a>
Wellawaya (2N)	Jetwing Kaduruketha (4*) <a href="https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingkaduruketha/">https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingkaduruketha/</a>  Featured in <a href="https://issuu.com/wanderlust/docs/wl233-master-optimized-low/160">https://issuu.com/wanderlust/docs/wl233-master-optimized-low/160</a>
Yala (2N)	Jetwing Yala (5*) <a href="https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingyala/">https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingyala/</a>
Galle (2N)	Jetwing Lighthouse (5*) <a href="https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwinglighthouse/">https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwinglighthouse/</a>
Colombo (2N)	Jetwing Colombo Seven (4*) <a href="https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingcolombosseven/">https://www.jetwinghotels.com/jetwingcolombosseven/</a>

As denoted above, the accommodation will be in a combination of 4\* and 5\* properties – in the unlikely event that a hotel needs to be substituted it will be of a similar standard or higher.

## The price... Cdn \$8,495 / person

Pricing (exc. Insurance) / per person - Cdn\$	Including Air (from Toronto)
Per person (double occupancy)	\$8,495
Single supplement	\$1,650
Single share matching fee (A)	\$ 300 **
Transportation / hotel taxes and fees	\$ 765
Academic program registration fee (per MD registrant)	\$ 950
Entry visas (as at March 2024)	US\$50

(A) Single share matching fee – can't find a traveling partner but don't want to pay the single supplement? We'll keep our eyes open for similar clients and try and find you a compatible person to share a room with. However, if we are unable to find you a suitable companion the single supplement will be payable.

Air upgrades are available to **Business class** (see our registration form for details).

### REPEAT CUSTOMER DISCOUNT

If you have travelled with Doctors-on-Tour before, you are eligible for our Repeat Customer Discount. Simply deduct \$100 /person for each separate tour that you have travelled with the company on up to a maximum of \$300 /person (ie travelled on one previous tour, deduct \$100; two tours, \$200; three or more tours, \$300). **Please note, this discount is subject to the payment (s) for the tour being made by cheque.** The discount is to be made from the final balance payment with the deposit amount being paid in full.

### COST EFFICIENT INVOICING !

For **invoicing** purposes re Academic Program registrants and their companions, we can also provide a separate invoice with the registrant's air cost plus 100% of the accommodation costs included in the registrant's invoice.

### CANADIAN \$ PRICING !

Please note, unlike many programs offered by other companies which are quoted in US\$ (and are also usually land only prices excluding air fare), **our prices remain in Canadian\$** - and, with a premium now of almost 40% (at March 2024) when paying in US\$, this makes a significant difference.

### ONLINE REGISTRATION FORM

Our **online registration form** may be accessed via the direct link below –

<https://fs22.formsite.com/Doctorsontour/SRIL2410RegForm/index>

Full program information may also be found at –

<https://www.doctorsontour.ca/cme-programs-srilanka-upcoming-2410.php>



## Inclusions and Exclusions...

### Included in the price -

- Round trip international flights from Toronto to Colombo, Sri Lanka
- Private, modern, air conditioned coach transportation
- Scenic train from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya
- All meet and greet services and arrival and departure transfers\*\*
- Accommodation for a total of 15 nights (4\* properties)
- 15 breakfasts, 12 lunches, 6 dinners in a combination of hotel and local restaurants
- 1 soft drink is included with all meals
- Bottled water on tours
- Comprehensive daily itineraries including escorted tours of local cultural sites
- 3 game drives in 4x4 safari vehicles (Minneriya National Park and Yala National Park) with professional local English speaking driver-guides
- Whalewatching experience (Mirissa)
- All admission fees (except those specifically noted above)
- Fully escorted tour including services of local English speaking cultural and ecological experts
- Porterage
- CME program including tours of various local medical facilities (Academic Program Certificate provided)
- Hosting by our Group Leader and Medical Director, Dr. Peter Bloch and his wife Mary

\*\* meet and greet services and airport arrival and departure transfers are included if you are travelling on our group arranged flights – if you choose to arrange your own international flights (and they arrive / depart at different times to the group flights) additional private transfer costs will apply

### Exclusions -

- Any meals or activities not mentioned above
- Gratuities for local tour escort / guides and drivers
- Sri Lanka entry visa
- International airport departure tax (none at March 2024)
- Travel insurance – please note, **travel insurance (including medical and trip interruption coverage) is highly recommended** for this tour. Coverage is available through Doctors-on-Tour with Manulife Insurance – please check for further details in our brochure (page 37)
- All items of a personal nature such as telephone / internet usage, laundry services etc

For **invoicing** purposes re doctors and their spouse, we can also provide a separate invoice with the doctor's air cost plus 100% of the accommodation costs included in the doctor's invoice.

**THIS HIGHLY ANTICIPATED NEW PROGRAM HAS LIMITED CAPACITY AND, AS WE HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED A HIGH LEVEL OF ADVANCE REGISTRATIONS FROM CLIENTS, NOW HAS ONLY LIMITED AVAILABILITY REMAINING. WE ARE THEREFORE EXPECTING IT TO BECOME FULLY SUBSCRIBED QUICKLY.**

**WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND REGISTERING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE YOUR RESERVATION**

## Misc information you need to know...

### Travel documentation and visa

An entry visa is required for Canadian citizens to enter into Sri Lanka (cost is US\$50 as at March 2024). It is a straightforward online application process and further details regarding the application process will be provided closer to departure.

In addition, your passport must be valid for at least 6 months beyond your departure date from Sri Lanka.

Citizens of other countries should check their requirements at <https://cibtvisas.ca/>

### Mandatory vaccinations – NONE

There are no mandatory vaccinations required at the present time (March 2024) for entry into Sri Lanka.

### Recommended medical precautions

Travellers should always ensure that they are up to date on **routine vaccines** such as measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, varicella (chickenpox) and influenza and COVID-19.

Hepatitis A/B vaccinations are also recommended for travel to Sri Lanka.

There is no requirement for either yellow fever vaccinations or malaria precautions in Sri Lanka.



## Travel insurance information... Coverage available through Manulife Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out travel insurance to protect you against the unexpected due to, in particular, limited provincial health care coverage afforded to Canadians while traveling overseas and the cancellation provisions inherent in your booking. We offer two insurance coverage options –

**Non-medical Inclusive package** - There are **significant inherent cancellation penalties** associated with your booking as detailed in our booking terms and conditions and this insurance package provides coverage for all monies paid for your trip if you should have to cancel due to medical, or other listed, reasons either relating to yourself or a member of your immediate family. It also covers you for trip interruption costs short notice return flight home etc) for medical reasons again, either relating to yourself or an immediate family member as well as flight and travel accident and baggage insurance.

**All-Inclusive package** – provides coverage for all the components in the non-medical package, plus unlimited health coverage while in the destination

Note, if you believe you may have coverage through your **credit card** we would strongly advise checking with the credit card company the actual coverage afforded to ensure it covers medical, trip cancellation and trip interruption as not all of these items are covered (or may only offer limited coverage as to trip duration or insured \$amount in the event of a claim - sometimes as low as only \$1,000 per person) by all kinds of cards.

**"Cancel for any reason (CFAR)" coverage - NEW and at no additional cost !!**

So long as you **purchase either of the two insurance policies above at the same time as your tour booking**, you are automatically entitled to this added benefit of CFAR coverage whereby, if you need to cancel your tour booking up to 14 days or more before departure **for any reason**, your policy will refund you up to a maximum of 50% of the cancellation penalties incurred. This is excellent peace of mind coverage to protect you against (50% of the) cancellation penalties incurred in a situation where the reason for cancellation is not one of the regular covered risks in your policy (ie it is essentially "change of mind" insurance).

Our insurance premiums (dependent upon your age at the time of purchasing insurance and your total tour costs) are below -

Total insurable costs (\$/person)	NON-MEDICAL INCLUSIVE								ALL-INCLUSIVE							
Age>	0-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+	0-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+
4000 - 4500	349	369	413	455	476	620	759	1,003	432	450	558	640	940	1,069	1,437	1,513
4500 - 5000	376	399	448	495	519	674	824	1,079	459	480	593	681	986	1,129	1,513	1,599
5000 - 5500	403	429	483	536	563	728	889	1,155	486	510	629	721	1,031	1,188	1,589	1,686
5500 - 6000	430	458	518	576	606	782	954	1,230	513	539	664	762	1,077	1,247	1,664	1,772
6000 - 6500	457	488	553	617	649	836	1,018	1,306	540	569	699	802	1,123	1,307	1,740	1,859
6500 - 7000	484	518	588	657	692	890	1,083	1,381	567	599	734	843	1,169	1,366	1,815	1,945
7000 - 7500	511	548	623	698	735	944	1,148	1,457	594	629	769	883	1,215	1,426	1,891	2,031
7500 - 8000	538	577	658	738	779	998	1,213	1,533	621	658	804	924	1,261	1,485	1,967	2,118
8000 - 8500	565	607	693	779	822	1,052	1,278	1,608	648	688	839	964	1,307	1,544	2,042	2,204
8500 - 9000	592	637	728	819	865	1,106	1,342	1,684	675	718	874	1,005	1,353	1,604	2,118	2,291
9000 - 9500	619	666	764	860	908	1,160	1,407	1,759	702	747	909	1,045	1,399	1,663	2,193	2,377
9500 - 10000	646	696	799	900	951	1,214	1,472	1,835	729	777	944	1,086	1,445	1,723	2,269	2,463
10000 - 10500	673	726	834	941	995	1,268	1,537	1,911	756	807	980	1,126	1,490	1,782	2,345	2,550
10500 - 11000	700	755	869	981	1,038	1,322	1,602	1,986	783	836	1,015	1,167	1,536	1,841	2,420	2,636
11000 - 11500	727	785	904	1,022	1,081	1,376	1,666	2,062	810	866	1,050	1,207	1,582	1,901	2,496	2,723
11500 - 12000	754	815	939	1,062	1,124	1,430	1,731	2,137	837	896	1,085	1,248	1,628	1,960	2,571	2,809
12000 - 12500	781	845	974	1,103	1,167	1,484	1,796	2,213	864	926	1,120	1,288	1,674	2,020	2,647	2,895
12500 - 13000	808	874	1,009	1,143	1,211	1,538	1,861	2,289	891	955	1,155	1,329	1,720	2,079	2,723	2,982
13000 - 13500	835	904	1,044	1,184	1,254	1,592	1,926	2,364	918	985	1,190	1,369	1,766	2,138	2,798	3,068
13500 - 14000	862	934	1,079	1,224	1,297	1,646	1,990	2,440	945	1,015	1,225	1,410	1,812	2,198	2,874	3,155
14000 - 14500	889	963	1,115	1,265	1,340	1,700	2,055	2,515	972	1,044	1,260	1,450	1,858	2,257	2,949	3,241
14500 - 15000	916	993	1,150	1,305	1,383	1,754	2,120	2,591	999	1,074	1,295	1,491	1,904	2,317	3,025	3,327

**For residents of Ontario**, simply accept your choice of insurance (Non-medical Inclusive or All-Inclusive coverage) on our *online* registration form and we will apply the premium above on your invoice confirmation (if using our *pdf* registration form, enter the applicable premium from the above table when completing the registration form)

**For residents of Canadian provinces other than Ontario**, insurance regulations state that travel insurance should be taken out directly with Manulife Insurance, albeit through a direct web link hosted on our web site, ie you should purchase your travel insurance policy by simply following the link below to take advantage of our preferred rates with Manulife) via our company's exclusive Manulife link:

<https://www.igoinsured.com/direct/ManulifeWorld.aspx?ag=ONTOTPR>

A detailed overview of coverage benefits and limitations of each insurance policy that we offer through Manulife may be found at -

[www.doctorsontour.ca/manulife-travelinsuranceguide.php](http://www.doctorsontour.ca/manulife-travelinsuranceguide.php)

### **Non-Canadian residents**

For residents of countries outside of Canada (including the USA), insurance regulations allow us to sell "**Trip Cancellation**" insurance (this policy includes both trip cancellation and trip interruption coverage but not medical coverage). We do find that many of our overseas clients already have medical insurance through other channels and therefore, if this is the case, you may purchase "Trip Cancellation" coverage by following the link below to purchase the "Trip Cancellation" insurance policy (taking advantage of our preferred rates with Manulife) via our company's exclusive Manulife link:

<https://www.igoinsured.com/direct/ManulifeWorld.aspx?ag=ONTOTPR>



## Testimonials

"Great hotel facilities, excellent service – an extremely enjoyable, and educational, week  
Dr. Doug Wooster, Toronto – Chile, 2005

"Great company, well organized and interesting tours, educational lectures and great food (and wine....!) – Fantastic trip!"  
Dr. Ray Martin, Toronto – Argentina, 2006

"Thanks for planning such an amazing trip. Our congenial group enjoyed so many rich experiences together and collected memories to last a lifetime. Each day was an adventure!  
Andrea Maurice – Vietnam / Cambodia, 2007

"I want to express our appreciation for a wonderful trip. The tour operator and the guides were excellent and everything went very smoothly.... this was a tremendous trip which we will need to review again over the coming days to catalogue and appreciate all the places we visited and the marvelous things we saw.. Thanks again for all the hard work in putting the trip together with the memorable result that was achieved...  
Dr. Rudy Hyles, Mississauga – Ecuador & The Galapagos, 2008

"Wonderful people! Wonderful places!"  
Dr. Phil McGuire, Ottawa – Peru, 2009

"The organization and accommodation were both excellent. We were always looked after with consideration and provided with a wide variety of interesting activities and experiences. The guides were most helpful and informative. A wonderful tour!"  
Dr. Michael Dales, Toronto - Ecuador & The Galapagos, 2009

"I do not have words to express my appreciation and admiration for the your hospitality and service provided by your company and your partners on the ground in India"  
Dr. Sudhir Pandya – Northern India, 2009

"A wonderful trip. It was amazing to see so many different animals co-existing on the beautiful African plains. The Kenyan and Tanzanian people we met were gracious and welcoming. Our host/trip manager was excellent - very bright, knowledgeable, good problem solver, great people skills - a delightful man who really made our trip memorable. Our guide/driver was also excellent - very knowledgeable, an excellent driver and keen to make our safari experience a good one. We had lots of fun and learned a lot from him. I loved the parks and reserves - the Serengeti and Ngorongoro are absolutely amazing".  
Andrea Maurice, Toronto – Kenya & Tanzania – March, 2010

"The guides throughout the trip were superb, well informed with excellent local knowledge and willing to discuss any topic! The visits to the local hospitals were excellent. A fantastic tour!"  
Dr. Linda Stirk, Toronto - Ecuador & The Galapagos (and Peru), 2010

"We had a great visit to the Falls. Stefani was a very helpful guide. The hotel and facilities were fabulous. The tour overall was an exciting experience. Thanks to you both and Ian for the hard work and planning.  
Drs. Hirsch and Indra Rastogi, Ancaster – Brazil, 2011

"In addition to exploring the fantastic sights of Northern India, our group visited local hospitals and clinics to learn more about how medicine is practiced in India as well as in the SOS Children's village in Jaipur and the Mother Teresa charity Mission in Agra" - Dr. Serge Puksa, Northern India, 2011

"We found this tour to be a wonderful adventure... even more than we had anticipated. The planning and attention to detail on the ground ensured we had a comprehensive introduction to the many wonders of Ecuador. I will definitely consider participating in another program and will be certain to share details with my colleagues"  
Dr. Alison Kelford, Oakville - Ecuador & the Galapagos, 2011

"Spain greatly surpassed my expectations, offering wonderful gastronomic experiences, lavished with outstanding wines and extremely hospitable people with a culture and history that is as rich as deep. Fernando Garcia, through his many connections, was able to allow us access to exclusive vineyards , where we were submerged in to the local cuisine and regaled with their finest wines".

Dr. Peter Bloch, Oakville – Spain Gourmet tour, 2011

"Our guide was excellent, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Cooking classes were good and the hotels were excellent"

Dr. Barbara Flanagan, Charlottetown – Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia, 2012

"Excellent! Loved the trip and well worth it. Life changing experience, excellent speakers and very well organized. Met some great people and will keep in touch for future trips. Will definitely book another doctors-on-tour trip in the future"

Dr. Janel Gracey, London – Bali, 2012

"A quick personal note to tell you how much we enjoyed our trip to Spain & Portugal. The whole agenda was well planned and well carried out. The winery visits and dinners were amazing, we learned so much about the history and making of Port."

Dr. Blair Fraser, Guelph – Spain & Portugal, 2012

"We had a magical time in Machu Picchu - such a spiritual time at day break - our guide was great! Many thanks for the fabulous trip - memorable and well organized. Your company does such a great job and such an opportunity for us, and what a great group of people to share such an amazing trip with".

Dr. Paul Bates, London – Ecuador & the Galapagos, Peru 2012

"What an amazing trip this was ! Your company did such a fantastic job – well organized with wonderful support staff – everything left on time, great food, weather & traveling companions – and (our guide) Gonzalo was the best ! Thank you very much for such an unforgettable adventure".

Jack & Lore Brown, London - Ecuador & the Galapagos, 2012

"I have been fortunate to enjoy four trips with doctors-on-tour since 2009 - to Ecuador, Vietnam/Cambodia/Laos, India and Bali. All these tours were wonderful. Well-organized, excellent accommodations, top notch guides, remarkable CME experiences that broaden one's outlook on medicine and really great leaders of the tours. You should seriously consider taking one of these exotic trips. Beats lying on a beach!"

Dr. Linda Rapson, Toronto – 2013

"We enjoyed our extension to the UAE and saw an amazing amount in a short time. Our guide was very helpful, informative and pleasant and we appreciated how he was able to inform us about the country, it's people and customs. Excellent !"

Drs Christopher & Margaret Ibey, Parry Sound, On. – United Arab Emirates, 2013

"The whole trip was wonderful and very well organized. We appreciated the advance preparation information packages.

The hotel accommodation was excellent and the guides provided a lot of background information in Indian culture and society which made the trip even more valuable as a learning experience. We enjoyed all of it – including meeting Dr. Peter, & Mary, Bloch (Group Medical Director) and the great people in the group!"

Dr. Ron Eliosoff, Ottawa - South India, 2013

"Excellent trip – hotels, guides, food and company and we saw such wonderful sites.

Dr. Martin and Eileen McIntyre, Brantford - Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2013

"We had a wonderful trip. It was such an interesting mix of people that we laughed all the way through - an amazing experience and a fabulous time. The Pantanal was awesome and we also totally loved the old colonial town of Paraty. We enjoyed ourselves so much we are thinking of signing up for another one soon. Thanks again - you did a wonderful job - it was a dream".

Dyana Driscoll, Toronto – Brazil, 2013

"I was extremely pleased with my second trip through Doctors-on-Tour to Kenya & Tanzania - the tour was one of the most amazing things I have experienced!"

Dr. Kerri McGuire, Ottawa - Kenya & Tanzania, 2013



"Fantastic experience! Every detail to perfection."

Dr. Les Marien, Orangeville, On. - Spain Gourmet, 2013

"Had a great time! Very well organized"

Dr. Yusuf Januwala, Ipswich, Queensland, Australia - Ecuador (Galapagos) & Peru, 2013

"Our guide was amazing - so professional and knowledgeable. Great itinerary - Well done !"

Dr. Susan Smith, Frederickton, N.B - South Africa, 2014

"We had a wonderful trip. Places we stayed during the tour were all very nice and every one had a good time. Your local tour manager was wonderful, extremely helpful and very well organized. Thanks again for all your help"

Dr. Kumar Banerjee, Vancouver, B.C. - South India, 2014

"We felt the tour is one of the best (CME tours) we have been on. We keep missing the great Chilean wines and Argentinian beef. Right sized group and great company. CME tours were interesting and informative. Our guides were good and I enjoyed learning about the country from their comments".

Dr. Eduardo Aenlle, Fallbrook, California - Chile, Argentina and Patagonia Cruise, 2014

"It was an amazing trip thru Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos. It exceeded all our expectations. Our group leaders were gracious hosts. Their thirst for adventure and generosity of spirit added so much to our trip. The group we traveled with were a great bunch and we hope to cross paths in the future. The CMEs were informative and I enjoyed seeing the varied medical sites in each country"

Dr. Tom Stark, Timaru, New Zealand - Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2014

"Macchu Picchu and Galapagos were the highlights. Wonderful guides, very well organized and enjoyable. Tour leader did a great job !"

Dr. Michael Garner, Montreal, QC - Ecuador (Galapagos) & Peru, 2014

"Our guide was absolutely fabulous - she took superb care of us and added so much to the trip through her knowledge of New Zealand history, flora and fauna. Peter and Mary (Bloch) were wonderful medical leaders - calm, helpful, interesting and vivacious - kudos to them."

Drs. Peter & Louise Bobechko, Toronto, On. - New Zealand, 2015

"I really enjoyed this tour - Rajasthan and Agra are beautiful. Our tour escort, Kumar, has great people skills, and has been very attentive to everyone's needs - Himanshu has been an excellent guide and is very knowledgeable. We would love to return to India on your South India program"

Dr. Rajalaxmi Wong, North Bay, On. - North India, 2015

"The trip to South Africa was awesome - I would rank it up there with my favorite so far with Doctors on Tour. The people in our group were wonderful - it was a total joy and I can see now why South Africa is one of your favorite destinations"

Dyana Driscoll, Toronto, On.- South Africa, 2015

"Bob and I enjoyed the time shared with each of you in Bali,  
My expectations for the tour were met and exceeded .It really was a small window into the Balinese culture.  
To (our group leaders) Bonnie and Mel, Thanks! Hope this isn't our last tour.  
You all were interesting and gracious, Terima Kasih. Salamat Jalan"

Dr. Bob & Evelyn Lawler, Gibsons, PA - Bali 2015

"I found the trip to Spain to be a great combination of site-seeing, CME and amazing gourmet meals and wines selected by an internationally famous chef. We visited several famous vineyards and were able to sample their wines. The visit to an ophthalmological institute was especially memorable, we watched lens surgery in close up. The visit was very well organized with time to explore cities on our own, as well as tours of architectural wonders. I strongly recommend this tour as a great experience"

Dr. John Cocker, Stouffville, On - Spain Gourmet, 2015

"Thank you for your excellent guidance during our trip to Ecuador. the trip was very good, and the logistics and handling of the group were excellent"

Dr. David Spence, London, On - Ecuador (including the Galapagos and Amazon), 2015

"The trip was exceptional in every way. Our guide was more than just a tour guide - the knowledge she shared was detailed and interesting - what an ambassador for her country! The high level of care that she offered was above and beyond anything that we have ever experienced. We thoroughly enjoyed every minute of this trip! Thank you!"  
Dr. Les Marien, Orangeville, On - New Zealand, 2016

"The tour guides in each country were excellent. Fabulous trip!  
Dr. Gail Neild, Woodbridge, On. – Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2016

"An enjoyable and enlightening tour"  
Dr. Brian Davies, Sarnia, On. - China, 2016

"A great exposure to Balinese culture and the spiritual aspects behind their healing philosophy"  
Dr. Karyn Klapecki, Toronto, On. - Bali, 2016

"I am in withdrawal, eating salad. Good for the body, not as good for the soul as the food last week! What an awesome group of people to get to know! We felt truly blessed to enjoy Spain with all of you.  
Dr. Wendy Reimer, Breslau, ON – Spain Gourmet, 2016

"An extremely interesting, informative and invigorating tour. The medical CME components were excellent and I'm glad that we were able to see and experience so much".  
Dr. Paula Chalmers, Vancouver, B.C. - South Africa, 2017

"Myanmar was very well organized and our guide was excellent - the best I have ever had! The sites and activities in Bhutan were very enjoyable and the local medical facilities and clinics that we visited as part of the CME were good"  
Dr. Brenda Cholin, North Battleford, SK - Myanmar & Bhutan, 2017

"It was an incredible tour - we saw so much !"  
Dr. Mo Meghji, Kitchener, On. - Argentina & Chile, including Patagonia cruise, 2017

"This was a very good tour. The progress that the country has made over the years has been very significant. However, China still has multiple levels of Red Tape, both public and private that will not change ever, so it must be accepted. Overall a 9.5 out of 10 !"  
Dr. Ted Erb, Waterloo, On. - China, 2017

"Everything was excellent! We had a wonderful time. Hotels were superb. Thank you again for the well organized, all details worked out, great trip!"  
Dr. Andrea Cordas, Burlington, On. – South India, 2017

"It was our first trip with your company. John and I loved it. The itinerary was perfect. Busy days followed by quieter ones. Lorna and Ashley were lovely and so capable! The coordination was superb. Thank you. We had the trip of a lifetime!"  
Dr. John Gapski, Mississauga, On. – Ecuador & Galapagos, 2017

"We really enjoyed traveling with an interesting group of professionals which gave us the opportunity to visit places where the public normally does not have easy entry. Excellent pre-departure information and the tour was well-balanced with a mixture of historic and social highlights, while travelling through very different landscapes and areas of the country. The public/private health care system was well described on the Groote Schuur Hospital tour and the children's' song and dance performance at SOS children's village in Cape Town was touching. Our local tour guide was outstanding [5+++] and provided excellent context for the political, economic and social aspects of SA. He was calm, professional, responded quickly to everyone's needs and was very proud of his country".  
Helle & Tony Tosine, Toronto, On. – South Africa, 2017

"We really enjoyed New Zealand and the services provided by your company. The Academic Conference presentations were top caliber and contained information useful to both the specialist and generalist. I enjoyed getting to know and learning from the other group participants. We would recommend this trip and plan to travel with Doctors on Tour again".  
Dr. John Britt, Winston-Salem, NC - New Zealand, 2018

We enjoyed our trip very much. The hotels we stayed in were superb, the itinerary was great and the guides, both in Bhutan and in Myanmar, were fabulous. Overall it was a wonderful, memorable trip. Thank you very much!  
Dr. Sabine Ernsting, Adelaide, South Australia - Bhutan & Myanmar, 2018



So many highlights – favorites include Cape of Good Hope, Table Mountain, Kapama Game Reserve – because of excellent game rangers and trackers – saw the big 5 and so much more. Our local escort – excellent!!! Bus drivers also excellent. Coaches comfortable – great bonus to be able to charge cell phones inside buses. Bottom line – Awesome experience!!”

Dr. Cinda Lee, Toronto, ON - South Africa, 2018

“I found this to be a very well organized trip. It exceeded my expectations. I'd like to repeat it, but I'll join your other trips instead. Too much to see and to learn in this world.”

Dr. Kas Tuters, Toronto, ON – Bali, 2018

“I totally loved Singapore and Malaysia. The local escorts were honestly a ten star. There was nothing they would not do for us”.

Dyana Driscoll, Toronto, On. – Malaysia & Singapore, 2018

“This was an exceptional trip – thanks again! Everything was perfectly well orchestrated. It feels like we have been travelling for more than two weeks. We have learned so much. We will definitely recommend this trip to our friends. We have seen so many things. We have had exceptional guides. The group we travelled with was fantastic! Again, an amazing adventure!”

Dr. Collette Deslandres-Leduc, Montreal, Qc. – Ecuador and Peru, 2018

“Good guides, amazing sightseeing, loved the Patagonia cruise”

Dr. Chantal Breton, Kirkland, Qc. - Argentina & Chile, including Patagonia cruise, 2019

“Thanks for sending along (the song that you wrote about Bali) and for everything else. your stories, tips, enthusiasm, quiet presence and good company. This trip was certainly quite special. Please also pass on my thanks to Bonnie. Take good care”

Dr. Louise Lefort, Ottawa, On. – Bali, 2019

“This was an excellent unique tour combining both the cruise and a varied land component with spectacular sights ! Great group and local tour escort and cruise staff!”

Dr. Evelyn Brett, Toronto, On. – Iceland circumnavigation cruise and land, 2019

“Peter & Mary Bloch did an excellent job leading the group. The guides and others were very helpful and excellent - Amit 5\*, plus Sheva and team. I thoroughly loved the trip. It exceeded my expectations. The people are so sweet and lots of smiles! This is a great place to visit.”

Dr. Vickie Carducci, Kilworthy, On. - Northern India, 2019

“Malaysia was exhilarating! We had a wonderful, adventurous time, especially in the Borneo Rainforest. The local guides (Malek and Hirzan) were very friendly and helpful, very well versed in the history of Malaysia and we learnt a lot. The canopy walk was breathtakingly hair-raising. The tour was very well organized and the optional stay in Singapore was very relaxing. We look forward to more of your tours in the future”.

Dr. Shiraz Walji, Calgary, AB - Malaysia & Singapore, 2019

“Fantastic trip – well organized, packed with loads of things to do and see – but did not feel ‘superficial’. Just loved the opportunity to do and see so much. The group was fantastic – made new friends. Ian was a great tour leader”

Dr. Lorraine Manziga, Toronto, ON – Ecuador & the Galapagos, 2019

“Your tours are great. Thanks for the experience!”

Dr. Ikenna Ezeilo, Lethbridge, On. – South East Asia, 2020

“We enjoyed our experience in Iceland. Rachel and Joel (Kassner) do a great job as group leaders.”

Dr. John Britt, Winston Salem, NC - Iceland circumnavigation cruise and land, 2022

“Fun, food, fellowship, culture, history, knowledge, perspectives, some ailments & mishaps — all packed in 12 days. Thanks everyone for enriching Kitty & my life! This is by far the most magical CME trip we've ever had for the past 3 decades! 🤗🤗”

Dr. Wing Lim, Sherwood Park, AB - Spain Gourmet tour, 2022

"We are having a fantastic time.

Great group - have made many new friends.

We are ecstatic to be here.

(our local tour escort) Malik is a kind and patient person who gives 110% of himself - he truly goes above and beyond to make sure everyone is happy.

Thank you. Thank you Thank you."

Drs. Loraine Manzig and Kevin Sliwowicz, Toronto, On. - Malaysia & Singapore, 2022

"Excellent guidance and interesting sites. Sahara desert trip was fantastic - really enjoyed the drive out over the dunes - camel ride excellent ! Felt safe at all times, including in the cities. A very good cultural experience leading to a great appreciation of this beautiful country".

Dr. Les Marien, Orangeville, On. - Morocco, 2022

"Need another vacation after this trip as we saw so much! The group was fantastic and fun to be with. We enjoyed everyone's company!"

Dr. Nihad Ali-Ridha, Toronto, On. – Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2023

"Thank you so much for arranging this very special adventure.

It was wonderful! I so wish I had done it sooner so I could do it again.

Our local tour escort (Dion) was so knowledgeable, willing to share the history of the country in a way that helped us understand the WHY as well as the WHAT of the history of that breathtakingly beautiful country while he made us each feel welcome and valued as visitors. He obviously loves his homeland and has reason to do so.

The group was very compatible and new friendships were made. Caroline was very efficient".

Dr. Pat Barry, Burlington, On. – South Africa, 2023

"The Japan experience ranks among the very best offered by DoT - seamlessly blending the country's rich history and culture with outstanding cuisines and activities. The farewell Kimono dinner with Geisha entertainment was particularly noteworthy as well as the beauty of the Five Lakes region, majesty of Mt. Fuji, the ryokan experience and the many beautiful Japanese gardens and historic sites! Outstanding experience!"

Dr. Bruno Salena, Ancaster, On.- Japan, 2023

"This was an excellent trip – my 2<sup>nd</sup> time with Doctors-on-Tour to Iceland and I would do it again! I enjoyed seeing a few new locations and different restaurants (thanks to Thordis). I can't recommend this trip highly enough! As all of your tours have been, it was well planned, well organized and very good value. Thanks so much. See you next year in Japan!"

Dr. Mary Bruckschwaiger, London, On. - Iceland Circumnavigation Cruise and Land, 2023

"A wonderful trip. A busy itinerary but allowed freedom for personal time. Cannot say enough about the knowledge, enthusiasm and energy of our guides - always willing to cheerfully go that extra mile. Hotels were all high quality and well located."

Dr. Stephen Pond, Fredericton, NB – Spain, 2023

"Our trip to Morocco exceeded all expectations. We left with a better understanding of the country, its people and culture. The information, locations, activities and meals were exceptional. Our knowledgeable tour guide Mustapha answered any and all questions with pride. Our driver Mohamed was incredible and we always felt safe with him at the wheel. Our group leader and medical director Dr. Rachel Kassner, along with her husband Joel, had our days and nights running smoothly. They included the entire group and went above and beyond to care for everyone. A trip we will always remember. We loved the format of the trip and will definitely be booking with you in the future"

Dr. Moses Rambaran, Miramichi, NB - Morocco, 2024



**And about your Group Leaders and Medical Director, Dr. Peter, and Mary, Bloch (Oakville, On.)**

"Very well organized ! - Peter & Mary were excellent in encouraging productive and enjoyable interactions between group members which resulted in a cohesive and unified group and resulted in the whole tour unfolding smoothly"  
 Dr. Elizabeth Weber, Toronto - Spain, 2011

"Peter and Mary were excellent hosts (as usual). It was particularly helpful having Peter at the ATMs which seemed to mystify me. It was also wonderful having Peter talk about Chile - growing up there, his summers in Vina - our own personal tour guide!  
 Andrea Maurice, Toronto – Chile & Argentina, , 2012

"I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our recent trip to India. We all agreed that Peter and Mary were exceptional hosts. They were incredibly warm and welcoming and were on top of situations as they arose"  
 Dr. Ron Eliosoff, Ottawa - South India, 2013

"I want to give you some feedback on our amazing trip to South Africa. Our guide Craig was exceptional; lunch at La Petite Ferme was a highlight, great food, wine and scenery; in Swaziland, glass factory was very good the candle factory was great; Kapama River (Game) Lodge - amazing ! Soweto - great ! Overall it was a great trip, the group was easy to get along and of course Peter and Mary were great group leaders!"  
 Dr. Steve and Marg Szarka, Hamilton, On. - South Africa, 2014

"It was an amazing trip thru Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos. It exceeded all our expectations. Peter and Mary (Bloch) were gracious hosts. Their thirst for adventure and generosity of spirit added so much to our trip. The group we traveled with were a great bunch and we hope to cross paths in the future. The CMEs were informative and I enjoyed seeing the varied medical sites in each country"  
 Dr. Tom Stark, Timaru, New Zealand - Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos, 2014

"Our guide was absolutely fabulous - she took superb care of us and added so much to the trip through her knowledge of New Zealand history, flora and fauna. Peter and Mary (Bloch) were wonderful medical leaders - calm, helpful, interesting and vivacious- kudos to them."  
 Drs. Peter & Louise Bobechko, Toronto, On. - New Zealand, 2015

"Mary & Peter were definitely an 11 (out of 10). I thought they were absolutely amazing, kind and friendly"  
 Dianne Fournier, Toronto, On. - China, 2016

"Excellent tour guide - Excellent meals! Peter and Mary did a great job.  
 Dr. Sy Lam, Calgary, AB - South Africa, 2017

"Peter and Mary Bloch – great hosts, helped bring participants closer and engage as a group"  
 Dr. Jack Richman. Oakville, On. - Iceland circumnavigation cruise and land, 2019

"Thanks to you and Mary for your all your care and attention. It was a fantastic trip. Sorry we slept through happy hour... 😊"  
 Dr. Sonia and Joel Kurtz, Toronto, On. - Iceland circumnavigation cruise and land, 2019

"Very good tour – very good guides, very good, friendly and helpful group leaders, Peter and Mary – a pleasure! Excellent tour organization and visits."  
 Dr. Michael Garner & Dr. Jeanne Teitelbaum, Montreal, QC – Northern India, 2019

"Peter & Mary did a marvellous job !"  
 Dr. William Callaghan, Ottawa, On. - Spain Gourmet, 2022

Dr. Peter and Mary Bloch were exemplary in their role as group leaders. Mary is a gem! Outstanding experience!  
 Dr. Bruno Salena, Ancaster, On. - Japan, 2023



Doctors-on- Tour – Ecuadorian Amazon



Doctors-on-Tour - India



Doctors-on-Tour – Spain



Doctors-on-Tour - Chile & Argentina



Doctors-on-Tour – South East Asia



Doctors-on-Tour – China



## The fine print...

Please take the time to read and understand the Terms and Conditions of booking set out below prior to booking a tour with us.

The Terms & Conditions contained herein are the terms under which Doctors-on-Tour and on-Tour (being operating brands of Britcan International Consulting (B.I.C.) Inc. and together, for the purposes of these Terms & Conditions, being referred to collectively as DOT/OT/BIC) accepts reservations. Our liabilities are limited. When you make a payment of deposit and/or final payment, it is also an acknowledgement of receipt and acceptance of these Terms and Conditions.

**1. RESERVATIONS & DEPOSIT:** Early reservations are recommended to guarantee your reservation as several of the accommodation providers with which we make arrangements on your behalf have limited capacity. All services are strictly on a request basis, both for air travel and land requirements and subject to availability of seats and hotel/lodge/camp rooms and cruise cabins. A guaranteed non-refundable deposit of \$500 per person (with the exception of \$800 per person for Morocco and \$1,000 for Japan and Sri Lanka programs; \$700 per person for programs which include a cruise component, \$1,000 per person for Iceland cruises), together with the applicable travel insurance premium, is required with your reservation request. Tour extensions and, where applicable, seat upgrades in aircraft cabin categories higher than economy, are also subject to additional non-refundable deposits as detailed in each specific program's brochure. Reservations made for travel within 95 days (105 days for programs which include a cruise component) of the travel date will require full payment at the time of reservation. Certain non-standard arrangements may require higher deposit and the same will be advised to you at the time of booking. Please be aware that some airfares (outside of our group air blocks) require full payment at time of booking and will be advised to you accordingly at the time of your booking confirmation.

**2. FINAL AND/OR BALANCE DUE PAYMENT:** Guaranteed payment of all balances due is no later than 95 days (105 days for programs which include a cruise component, 110 days for Sri Lanka programs and 125 days for Morocco programs) prior to departure date. If payment of the balance due is not received by the stipulated date, we reserve the right to cancel your reservation without refund of deposit.

**3. CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS:** Visa & MasterCard credit cards are accepted as form of payment. We do accept any other kinds of cards, including either American Express or Diners Club. Your online authorization by way of our Online Registration Form acts as your approval for the credit card provided as part of your registration to be charged for both the initial deposit (and travel insurance premium, where applicable) as well as the future balance payments on the date they become due, together with any other charges due relating to the booking that have been requested by you in writing (including by current or future electronic mail communication). For registrations that are not received via our Online Registration Form, but instead are forwarded to DOT/OT/BIC by mailing, faxing or e-mailing a scanned completed copy of our (non-online) Registration Form, your signature on such (non-online) Registration Form verifies your approval for your credit card to be charged. No services will be provided without receipt of either the authorized Online Registration Form or the duly signed (non-online) Registration Form. Third party payments may have restrictions.

**4. CANCELLATIONS & CHANGES:** The deposit amounts (for both the main tour and any optional extensions reserved), as well as any travel insurance premiums paid, are 100% non-refundable and non-transferable. Cancellation penalties for bookings cancelled by the client after the final balance due date (95 days before departure; 105 days before departure for programs which include a cruise component; 110 days for Sri Lanka programs, 125 days for Morocco programs) are as follows: 95 – 61 (105 - 61 days for programs which include a cruise component) days before departure – 25% of total price paid; 60 – 31 days – 50% of total price paid; 30 days or less – 100%. Our Morocco and Sri Lanka programs have different cancellation penalties after the balance due date, as follows ; Morocco : 125 – 91 days before departure – 20% of total price paid; 90 – 61 days – 35% of total price paid; 60 – 31 days – 50% of total price paid; 30 days or less – 100%; Sri Lanka : 110 – 91 days before departure – 20% of total price paid; 90 – 61 days – 35% of total price paid; 60 – 31 days – 50% of total price paid; 30 days or less – 100%. (Notwithstanding the foregoing, any domestic Canada flight purchased as an additional service to the advertised package is 100% non-refundable irrespective of the date of cancellation). If payments are not received by their due dates, we reserve the right to cancel the booking without further notice. Bookings are non-transferable. There will be no refund for unused land arrangements after departure from North America. In the event of the cancellation by DOT/OT/BIC of any or all components of the travel services offered herein, DOT/OT/BIC will offer either a refund, or future travel credit, depending on the situation with our supplier partners subject to any specific penalties relating to airline seats that would be out of our control and would obviously be dependent upon the air ticket conditions as well as any cancellation penalties that may be charged by third party suppliers of services at the destination. Irrespective of whether a tour booking is cancelled by the client or if any or all components of the travel services are cancelled by DOT/OT/BIC, airfares may be subject to different rules and cancellation fees including some airfares may be fully non-refundable once the booking is confirmed regardless of when it was made including upgraded air cabin classes (ie premium economy, business and first class cabins) which are subject to different rules and cancellation fees based on the individual fare class in which the seats are purchased.

**5. TRAVEL INSURANCE:** To protect against cancellation charges, we strongly recommend purchasing Cancellation Protection and Travel Interruption Insurance. In the event of illness, medical and hospital expenses are the traveler's responsibility and no refunds will be made, partial or total, for the purchased tour. We strongly urge that you purchase either the Non-Medical Inclusive insurance (ie Cancellation Protection and Travel Interruption Insurance), All Inclusive insurance (Non-Medical coverage plus health coverage), or the Premium Protection Plan insurance package (All Inclusive coverage with higher coverage limits) offered by DOT/OT/BIC through Manulife Insurance. COVID-19 is currently viewed as a pre-existing situation by all insurance companies, including Manulife Insurance, and therefore is an exclusion under those policies that include health insurance, ie All Inclusive and Premium Protection Plan insurance packages. For coverage relating to COVID-19 health claims while on your tour, Manulife offers separate coverage, ie COVID-19 Pandemic Travel Insurance. Some countries may require proof of medical insurance, including specifically for COVID-19.

**6. TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION, VISA & OTHER IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS:** A Canadian citizen must be in possession of a passport that must remain valid for a minimum of 6 months from the date of conclusion of their journey for all destinations offered with the exception of New Zealand, Spain/Portugal and countries on our Eastern Europe program where the passport must remain valid for a minimum of 3 months from the date of conclusion of their journey. Tour participants must also ensure that they comply with all visa and health requirements of countries they intend to visit.

For Canadian citizens, a tourist entry visa (or, in some cases, a reciprocity fee) is required for entry into the following destinations offered by DOT/OT/BIC -

- Bhutan, Brasil, China, India, Kenya, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Tanzania; Vietnam (tourist entry visa, or a visa pre-approval letter in some cases, must be obtained prior to departure from Canada); Cambodia, Laos, Zambia (tourist entry visa may be obtained upon arrival in the destination)
- A tourist entry visa is not required for entry into Argentina, Bali (Indonesia), Chile, Ecuador, Iceland, Japan, Malaysia, Morocco, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Spain and any country on our Eastern Europe program.

Non Canadian citizens may have different requirements. It is the passenger's responsibility to ensure that all his or her passport, visa and mandatory health vaccination requirements for entry into the country are met and the cancellation penalties referred to above will apply if a passenger is not allowed into the destination country (or determines in advance of departure that he will not be allowed into the destination country) due to lack of proper documentation including, but not limited to, passport, visa, customs, health or currency provisions required by the destination country thus preventing him from participate in the tour.

While COVID-19 remains an ongoing issue, some countries may introduce specific medical requirements for entry which may completing medical wellness declarations upon arrival and/or proof of a negative COVID-19 test and/or proof of having received an approved COVID-19 vaccination. Proof of medical insurance, including specifically for COVID-19, may also be required. As regulations and requirements continue to change by country, we will notify you of any specific necessary requirements for your destination closer to departure.

Final tour documents consisting of detailed tour itinerary, vouchers, and airline tickets will be forwarded approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure subject to receipt of final payment.

**7. PRICING POLICY:** Accommodations and services at the destination are contracted in local currencies and/or US Dollars. Due to frequent fluctuations in currency exchange (as well as other factors beyond our control including, but not limited to, fuel costs, transportation taxes and airport and local surcharges), prices are subject to change with or without notice and surcharges may apply for which we would endeavor to inform you as soon as possible. However, once we have received your final payment we would either waive any price increase or allow you to cancel your booking without penalty.

**8. UNUSED PORTION OF THE TOUR:** No refund will be made for any unused accommodations, missed meals, transportation segments, cruise portions, sightseeing tours or any other service. Such unused items are neither refundable nor exchangeable.

**9. ACCOMMODATIONS:** We use a variety of accommodations on our programs with many of our properties specifically chosen to reflect the local style and culture of the region. Our rating system reflects the majority of the accommodations throughout each program but some variety can occur. Ratings are based not only on room quality but also on facilities and location. Accommodation ratings in overseas destinations outside of Canada are an arbitrary measure and their definition from country to country can differ slightly as well as not always being consistent between individual properties in that particular destination nor are they necessarily comparable to an equivalent rating in North America. Rooms are assigned by the respective supplier(s) on a run-of-the-house basis, in category (ies) as specified in the itinerary and the right is reserved to substitute properties/hotels/lodges/camps/cruise/ships as conditions warrant such change for reasons beyond our control. Accommodations on twin occupancy basis, is provided at the properties/hotels/lodges/camps/cruise ships as specified or similar. Single room supplements apply to persons occupying sole use of a room/cabin but travelling with other passengers on the same tour and sharing transport cost on transfers, game drives, coach tours, sightseeing and excursions. Quoted single room rate does not necessarily mean single occupancy of a double room, as several of the establishments offered have especially designed single occupancy units.



**10. SINGLE PASSENGERS TRAVELLING TOGETHER:** If you are travelling with a companion and each paying separately the regular each of two double sharing accommodation rate and your companion decides to cancel, the remaining travelling passenger will be responsible for either finding a replacement travelling companion to take the cancelled passenger's place or must pay the single supplement and travel on a single basis.

**11. AGE & HEALTH REQUIREMENTS:**

**Minimum Age:** The minimum age for the majority of our tours is 12 at the time of travel.

**Maximum Age:** We have no upper age limit for our tours though we inform you that our tours may include some components for which group members need to be in good physical condition in order to be able to participate. We will provide details on mandatory and recommended health requirements but it is your responsibility to ensure that you obtain proper and detailed medical advice at least 6 weeks prior to travel for the latest health requirements and recommendations for your destination and how they impact your own personal health situation.

**12. MEALS & BEVERAGES:** Meals as included on our itineraries are either buffet meals and/or table d'hôte. Meals ordered through room service are not included and must be paid directly to the establishment. Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, and bottled water are included only where indicated on the itinerary. Unless specifically mentioned in your itinerary, all drinks (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) are to be purchased and paid directly to the establishments.

**13. OPTIONAL TOURS & EXCURSIONS AND TOUR EXTENSIONS:** It is our intent to operate any optional tours & excursions and tour extensions on a private group basis. However, should the number of participants be of an insufficient level, we reserve the right to either

- (1) add a surcharge to the previously stated selling price to be able to still offer the extension on a private basis or
- (2) operate any individual tour on a shared basis with other non-group participants or
- (3) cancel the tour and provide a full refund of all monies paid.

No refunds can be provided for cancellation of any tour by the client while in the destination.

**14. SPECIAL REQUESTS:** While we will make every effort to accommodate special requests, eg., room/cabin locations, adjoining rooms, non-smoking rooms, bed preferences, special dietary meal requests, these cannot be guaranteed and DOT/OT/BIC cannot be held responsible if such requests cannot be fulfilled. Requests for upgrading rooms/cabins are subject to additional charges. Any deviations to the standard program arrival and departure flight dates should be notified to us by separate e-mail at the time of booking and are subject to availability and also any applicable flight class supplement.

**15. SEATING ASSIGNMENT ON FLIGHTS:** Our air arrangements are made via group contracts with the airlines and are therefore subject to more restrictive airline Terms & Conditions and policies than for seats purchased individually from airline web sites. If you have a particular seat request, we will do our best to fulfill it subject to the policies of the airlines. Certain airlines assign group seating automatically for which the specific location within the group block is out of our control and to which the airlines do not provide access for us to change specific seat locations; and several airlines do not allow for specific advance seat assignment at all in which case specific seats will be assigned at airport check-in.

**16. DOCUMENT DELIVERY:** Your travel documents will be sent to you approximately 3 weeks prior to departure. For bookings received within 3 weeks of departure, express delivery of documents will require a courier delivery fee of \$30 to cover extra handling and processing. Additional courier charges will apply for all residents outside of Canada, irrespective of when the booking is made.

**17. CONSUMER PROTECTION:** DOT/OT/BIC are licensed under the Ontario Government Ministry of Consumer & Corporate Relations, Travel Industry Act 1974, Registration No. 50009110. The Act is administered by the Travel Industry Council of Ontario (TICO), the government regulated body which is responsible for enforcing and monitoring the Travel Industry Act, including the protection of advance monies paid to its registrants by consumers. More information about TICO is available at <http://www.tico.on.ca/>

**18. NOTICE TO TRAVELLERS:** Canadians enjoy a living standard which is among the highest in the world. In other countries, the uninterrupted supply of water and electricity, local health conditions, levels of security and standards of food and beverages may sometimes differ from those enjoyed at home. Illness or inconvenience resulting from the services provided or omitted at the destination are outside the reasonable control of DOT/OT/BIC who bear no responsibility for such illness or inconvenience. DOT/OT/BIC cannot accept responsibility for the behavior of other guests/groups nor the unlikely event of the withdrawal of services or facilities due to local cultural and political events, or strikes.

## 19. ACCEPTANCE OF RISK:

You acknowledge that participation in overseas travel involves a degree of personal risk and that you may be visiting places where the political, cultural and geographical attributes present dangers and physical challenges greater than those present in our daily lives. You acknowledge that you are choosing to travel at a time where you may be exposed to epidemics and/or pandemics including, but not limited to, the COVID-19 virus. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure your safety and may require you to follow additional safety protocols on your trip.

We use information from government foreign departments and reports from our own contacts in each destination, including our local destination supplier partners, assessing whether the itinerary should operate. However, it is the responsibility of every traveller to acquaint yourself with all relevant travel information, including applicable health and safety risks and the nature of your itinerary including checking the Government of Canada's Travel Advice and Advisories page <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories> (for travellers resident outside of Canada, you should refer to the equivalent travel advisory sources of your own government) for information and updates about your travel destination in order to be aware of any issues that may impact the safety and security of your travel. You acknowledge that your decision to travel is made in light of consideration of this information and you accept that you are aware of the personal risks attendant upon such travel. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we accept no liability in relation to these additional risks.

**20. FORCE MAJEURE:** DOT/OT/BIC shall not be liable for any claims, losses, damages, costs, expenses, delays or loss of enjoyment, of any nature or kind whatsoever, resulting from events beyond our or a supplier's reasonable control, including but not limited to acts of God; war; civil commotion or insurrection; riot; blockade or embargo; fire; explosion; breakdown; union dispute, strike, lockout or other labor disputes or disruptions; earthquake; epidemic, pandemic or other health emergency; flood; windstorm or other extreme weather event; lack or failure of courses of supply; passage of any law, order, proclamation, regulation, restraint, ordinance, demand, requisition or requirement or any other act of any government authority, whether or not foreseeable, which would make it dangerous or not viable for a trip to commence or continue.

**21. OUR RESPONSIBILITIES:** DOT/OT/BIC makes arrangements with a network of third party suppliers, ie., airlines, tour operators, ground handlers, accommodation providers, cruise companies, activity providers, coach and transfer companies, car rental companies, tour and local guides, government agencies, and other independent contractors and individuals to provide you with the travel services and other services you purchase. Although we take care in selecting these third party suppliers, we have no control over them and, therefore, cannot be responsible for their acts or omissions. In the unlikely event that a particular hotel / lodge / cruise ship described in this brochure is not available we reserve the right to provide an alternate hotel / lodge / cruise ship of the equivalent standard. We also reserve the right to substitute another airline if the particular airline described in this brochure is not available.

The travel services provided by DOT/OT/BIC are subject to the applicable provincial Travel Industry Acts and Regulations and are subject to the conditions imposed by our third party suppliers and their liability is limited by their tariffs, conditions of carriage, tickets and vouchers and international conventions and agreements.

DOT/OT/BIC shall not be responsible for any loss, damage or injury, whether physical or mental, or to property, resulting from any delay, substitution or deficiency of quality of equipment or service, or any act, omission, negligence or commission of any party supplying any of the services or accommodation herein, its agents, servants, employees, subcontractors or for any claims for such loss, damage, or injury, whether physical or mental, arising therefrom, or from any cause that arises by reason of actions of parties other than DOT/OT/BIC. In the event that it becomes necessary or advisable for the comfort, well-being or security of the passengers, or for any reason whatsoever, to cancel or alter the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty to DOT/OT/BIC. The right is reserved to withdraw any or all tours should conditions warrant, also to decline to accept or retain any passengers as participants of the tours should such person's health, mental or physical condition, in the sole opinion of DOT/OT/BIC, impede, or threaten to impede, the operation and/or enjoyment of the tour for the other passengers. In such a case, DOT/OT/BIC will refund any monies that can be recovered for the unused portion of the tour, taking into account any additional charges or penalties from third party suppliers of services at the destination. DOT/OT/BIC can assume no responsibility for lost tickets or coupons. The liability of DOT/OT/BIC for any loss, damage or injury, whether physical or mental, arising from its own acts, omissions or negligence, is limited to the price of the services purchased.

**22. SEVERABILITY:** In the event that any term or condition contained in these Terms & Conditions is unenforceable or void by operation of law or as being against public policy or for any other reason then such term or condition shall be deemed to be severed from this contract or amended accordingly only to such extent necessary to allow all remaining terms and conditions to survive and continue as binding.

**23. PRIVACY POLICY:** Any personal information that we collect about you will be handled in accordance with our Privacy Policy and may be used for any purpose associated with the operation of a trip. In making this booking you consent to this information being passed on to the relevant persons such as our agents, service providers or other suppliers to enable us to operate the trip or, if permitted by any relevant e-marketing spam laws, to send you marketing material in relation to our events and special offers.