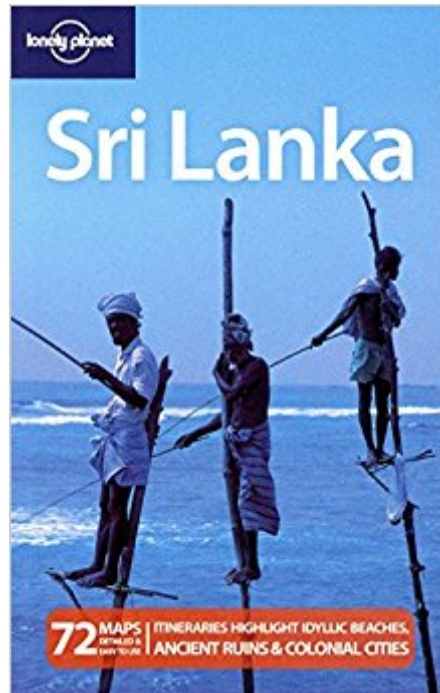




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Lonely Planet Sri Lanka (Country Travel Guide)



Synopsis

Lonely Planet knows Sri Lanka. With our 11th edition we help you board the train to the lush tea plantations of Ella, show you where the spotted leopards hide, lead you to Sigiriya's mysterious ancient ruins and when your adventuring is done, reveal the nation's most-secluded beaches. Lonely Planet guides are written by experts who get to the heart of every destination they visit. This fully updated edition is packed with accurate, practical and honest advice, designed to give you the information you need to make the most of your trip. In This Guide: Complete national-parks table leads you to the best elephant-spotting Detailed research on safe travel Unique Green Index directs you to sustainable listings

Book Information

Series: Country Travel Guide

Paperback: 332 pages

Publisher: Lonely Planet; 11 edition (August 1, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1741048354

ISBN-13: 978-1741048353

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 5.2 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.2 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,717,799 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #48 in Books > Travel > Asia > Sri Lanka #1267 in Books > Travel > Asia > Southeast #1627 in Books > Travel > Asia > General

Customer Reviews

We did not find this book very up to date throughout our travels. Sri Lanka is changing so fast that it really needs to be updated more often. Many things had changed since the book had been published. We found Trip Advisor much more helpful throughout our travels.

I bought this book as a review before I headed on my journey to Sri Lanka. During my trip I found that I used this book more and more and was shocked with the accuracy of the details it gave about sights and places to see in Sri Lanka. The authors provide great advice on places to stay, eat, and the culture!

I just returned from a trip to Kandy, in central Sri Lanka. This Lonely Planet, like others, packs a wonderful amount of info into a concise and pretty easy to navigate little pocket-book. When I was in Mexico, previously, I'd come to expect LP to list nearly every restaurant, hotel, etc. in the area. In Colombo and Kandy, I found that while it had a good enough selection that one could go on one's whole trip only on recommendations from the book, there were also a number of stores, restaurants, etc which were really worthy of note (imho) that were not included. In short, a great book, a worthy travel companion, and a wonderful fallback, but not the all encompassing guide to everything that I sometimes expect from LP.

Like all Lonely Planet guides, it is clearly written and consistently laid out. We are now really ready for our trip. I can't say more until we come back.

I've used Lonely Planet guides for three decades, spanning such diverse destinations as North Africa, SE Asia, the South Pacific, New Zealand, Central America, and Turkey, and have generally found them to range from acceptable (Central America) to excellent (most of the rest).

Unfortunately, LP's Sri Lanka guide is such a terrible piece of garbage compared to those, or any other guidebooks I've used, that the authors should have their word processors cremated. It's not that the prices are far higher than indicated; that's to be expected when foreign tourism rises sharply after 30 years of civil war, and domestic tourism booms with a rapidly-developing economy. It's not that some accommodation isn't as described; places age and management changes. It's simply that the breathless description of the wonderfulness of the various sites, and the time required to enjoy them, is so at odds with the reality that you can't believe the authors were ever in the country. For instance, LP raves about Unawatuna ("a place of dreams") and Mirissa (quiet serenity), beach resorts in the south. Well, Unawatuna might be a place of dreams if you're in a Lariam nightmare, but in reality it's a strip of horribly overdeveloped sand that you can only catch glimpses of between wall to wall buildings while dodging loud, smelly traffic on the dirty little lane that deafens most of the accommodation. The water, during the calmest time of year, is murky, and if you don't watch out, you'll be hit by a boat while stubbing your toes on the rocks. Mirissa, portrayed as a get-away-from-it-all paradise, is a yards-wide strip sandwiched between the murky water and a frantically-busy two-lane highway carrying six lanes of traffic, all beeping signals at each other from early until very late. Like Unawatuna, it's described as having "excellent" snorkeling, when in fact there's one tiny murky tidepool at the best of times. It's the same with the historical sites. The ancient city of Anurhadapura is described as being on a par with Bagan in Myanmar or Angkor in

Cambodia, and worthy of 3-4 days. When I spoke to the "concierge" at our guest house, he said we'd see it all in 5 hours, and wouldn't want a second day. Having spent a week at Angkor without feeling satiated, I laughed, but he was absolutely right. The same held for the other Cultural Triangle locations, all of them brutally overpriced. The "cultural capital", Kandy, was also described as being worthy of several days, but after seeing an evening cultural performance and the Temple of the Tooth on the first afternoon and evening, there was not much else there. The "wonderful" English architecture of Nuwara Eliya can be viewed in two easy ho-hum hours, not appreciated for days. It goes on and on. Everything is overstated, and the time allotments (4 weeks for the Cultural Triangle, 3 weeks for the south, 4 weeks for the hills) are frankly insane. Sri Lanka is a pleasant but unspectacular country to visit. Unless you're a surfer, the beaches are nice to look at, but useless for most other water sports, and they're being badly developed. The food is good if you enjoy curries and seafood, and the people are friendly and intelligent to deal with. The tea plantations are uniform carpets of green that cover hills that have been denuded to accommodate them, and the air is often too smoky for viewing anyway. Accommodation is rapidly headed toward being bad value. The National Parks like Yala see far too many visitor vehicles to maintain the natural experience. You can easily see all there is to occupy you in three weeks or less. I usually keep my LP guidebooks when I leave a country, or at least leave them for the benefit of the next traveler. I took my LP Sri Lanka, tore the pages out, ripped them to shreds, and wished I could make the authors eat them. This book goes beyond being useless. It misleads and misdirects you in a way that borders on the cynical. Don't buy it, and look with the greatest of care at the upcoming 2011 update. I'm betting it's a slightly reworked pile of the same BS.

The misinformation in this book could ruin any trip! Directions to bus or train stations? Not here. Travel times? Nope. Directions to most important places seem to be "ask a local." Thanks!

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