

A red circular logo with the text "Craig travel" in white. "Craig" is on the top line and "travel" is on the bottom line, with a small crown icon above the 'i' in "Craig".

Craig
travel

SRI LANKA & Kerala Backwaters



October 28 - November 14, 2027 • 18 Days • 44 Meals
SMALL GROUP • LED BY DAVID & ROSLYN CRAIG
Book Early and Save \$300 pp



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

UNESCO GEMS

Climb the 5th-century Sigiriya Rock Fortress, explore the Dambulla Cave Temples and Kandy, admire Polonnaruwa's 12th-century rock-carved Buddhas and visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth.

LIFE ON KERALA BACKWATERS

Cruise for seven nights aboard MV Vaikundam past paddy fields and Kumarakom's bird sanctuary, meet toddy tappers, coir weavers, shell harvesters and farmers, and tour Chavara Bhavan, Saint Chavara's ancestral home.

UNIQUE CULINARY EXPERIENCES

Savour a home-hosted dinner with a Sri Lankan family, heirloom recipes with a Syrian Christian family on their reclaimed backwater island, and banana-leaf feasts aboard. Ride into a Sri Lankan village for a cooking demonstration with local women, wander a Matale spice garden and sample tea at a Giragama tea factory.

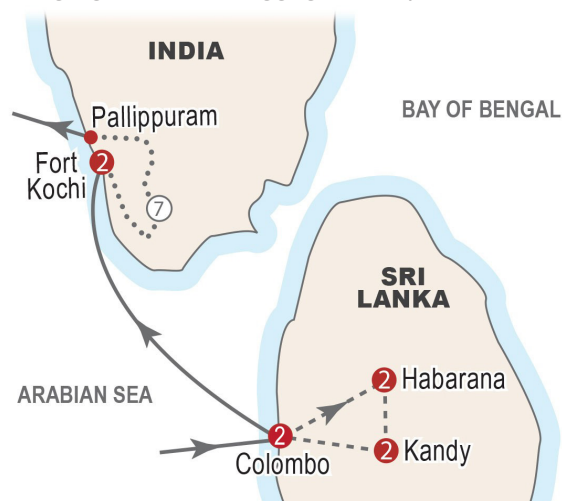
LIVING TRADITIONS

Experience Kathakali dance and Kalaripayattu martial arts, and watch bell metal casting and boat-building in Kerala. Admire Kandyan dancing, rhythmic drumming and fire-walking, see palm-leaf manuscripts inscribed at the Aluvihara Rock Temple and visit the Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage.

SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE Limited to 16 members

CT RATING: 3.5/5

Sri Lanka and Kerala (South India) offer magnificent scenery and rich cultural experiences, but both regions require an open mind to embrace their unique characteristics. Living standards can differ from those in Canada, traffic can be chaotic, and the itinerary includes travel days where facilities may be limited. The climb (if undertaken) up Sigiriya involves many steep steps, and temple visits require removing shoes and covering shoulders and knees. Aboard the MV Vaikundam, boarding, excursions and village walks will involve steps and uneven surfaces. We can expect weather that is both hot and humid. Meals may include spicy dishes. Members should be in good health, able to walk over rough surfaces and capable of managing their own luggage (if required).



Visit craigtravel.com/85 to learn more!

ITINERARY

OCT 28 | DEPART CANADA

We gather for our overnight flights to Sri Lanka.

OCT 29 | COLOMBO

Colombo greets us in the evening with a warm welcome at the airport. Once a trading port for Arab, Portuguese, Dutch and British merchants, the island's commercial capital is home to our lakeside hotel.

Cinnamon Lakeside - 1 night (D)

OCT 30 | PINNAWALA / DAMBULLA / HABARANA

We visit Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage, established in 1975 as a sanctuary for rescued wildlife, to observe its large elephant herd during feeding and river bath sessions. Following lunch, we visit the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Dambulla Rock Cave Temple, dating to the 1st century BC, with five cave sanctuaries adorned with intricate murals and more than 150 Buddha statues.

Cinnamon Lodge - 2 nights (BLD)

OCT 31 | SIGIRIYA – POLONNARUWA

We climb Sigiriya Rock Fortress, viewing its famous "Heavenly Maidens" frescoes and polished Mirror Wall along the way. A tractor ride and canoe crossing take us to a local village for a cooking demonstration and home-cooked lunch prepared by local women. In the afternoon, we explore Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka's medieval capital, renowned for the colossal rock-carved Buddha statues at Gal Vihara and the Royal Palace. (BLD)

NOV 1 | MATALE – KANDY

At the Aluvihara Rock Temple in Matale, we discover the historical site where Buddhist scriptures were first written on palmyra leaves using a metal stylus. Then, a tour of a village introduces us to the cultivation of spices and aromatic herbs such as cinnamon, cardamom, and pepper that have made Sri Lanka famous across the world, followed by lunch. We then drive into the misty hills toward Kandy, the island's last royal capital. *The Kandy Myst by Cinnamon - 2 nights (BLD)*

NOV 2 | KANDY

We explore Peradeniya's Royal Botanic Gardens, home to tropical palms, orchids, and medicinal flora, before touring Kandy's city centre along Kandy Lake and visiting a local gem museum and lapidary. We enjoy a traditional dance performance with drumming and fire-walking, visit the sacred Temple of the Tooth Relic, then share an authentic home-hosted meal with a local family. (BLD)

NOV 3 | KANDY – COLOMBO

We visit a tea plantation and factory in Giragama. Sri Lanka is world-renowned for Ceylon tea, and here we trace its journey from fresh leaf to finished cup. Sample freshly brewed tea before arriving back in Colombo for lunch. An afternoon city tour takes us through the historic Fort district, the vibrant Pettah markets, the Red Mosque, and Cinnamon Gardens. *Cinnamon Lakeside - 1 night (BLD)*

NOV 4 | COLOMBO – KOCHI

We fly to Kochi, a historic port shaped by centuries of Arab, Portuguese, Dutch, and British trade.

The Tower House - 2 nights (BD)

NOV 5 | KOCHI

Our guide walks us through Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, with a visit to St. Francis Church, Vasco da Gama's original burial place, and a view of the iconic Chinese fishing nets. After lunch at a restaurant, the afternoon is free to explore. (BLD)

NOV 6 | ALLEPPEY – KANJIPPADOM

Leaving Kochi, a short drive brings us to Alleppey to board the MV Vaikundam. Known as the Green Venice of the East, this region welcomes us with a traditional banana-leaf lunch as our ship sails through tranquil backwaters. Dropping anchor at Kanjippadam, we take a village walk to see traditional wooden kettuvallam boats crafted with coir, resin, and native timber. *MV Vaikundam - 7 nights (BLD)*

NOV 7 | KARUMADI – PALLANA

Cruising along quiet river channels, our floating hotel arrives at the ancient village of Karumadi. We stroll along paddy fields to view a local shrine housing the ruins of an ancient Buddha sculpture. Back on board, an interactive lecture by a professional Ayurveda doctor introduces us to India's 5,000-year-old holistic healing traditions. (BLD)

NOV 8 | THOTTAPPALLY – CHANGANKARI

Following a peaceful morning walk in Thottappalli, we travel inland to visit a rare snake-worship grove, the only temple in Kerala with female priests. Next, we head to Mannar, an ancient village famous for its bell metal craft, where we observe master craftsmen using riverbank clay for lost-wax casting, producing traditional temple lamps, ornate locks, bells, cauldrons, and sacred vessels. As evening falls, we take a relaxing stroll along Thottappalli beach before anchoring at Changankari. (BLD)

NOV 9 | ARANMULA – CHAMPAKKULAM

An early excursion brings us to Aranmula, world-famous for its GI-tagged metal mirrors that offer complete reflection. We explore Sree Parthasarathy Temple along the Pamba River before sharing lunch at a local home. In the afternoon, we cruise to Champakkulam to see historic St. Mary's Church and its ancient open-air Rock Cross before anchoring in Pulinkunnu. (BLD)

NOV 10 | KAINAKARY – KAVALAM

Our boat slips through canals to the ancestral home of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara, now a preserved home and museum. We cruise toward Kavalam, where the river reverses course and drains into Lake Vembanad. In your free time, you may take a ferry to walk along the paddy fields and even meet members of Kudumbashree, one of the world's largest women's empowerment networks. Back on board, we observe traditional toddy tappers collecting coconut sap. (BLD)

NOV 11 | KUMARAKOM – THANNEERMUKKOM

We enjoy dawn birdwatching in Kumarakom's wetlands, followed by a cooking demonstration and lunch with a local Syrian Christian family. Our cruise then passes Thanneermukkom Barrage on Lake Vembanad. (BLD)

NOV 12 | CHENGANDA – VAIKOM

We visit Chenganda village to meet local coir weavers, shell harvesters and fishermen. In Vaikom, we enjoy a Kathakali performance before a tuk-tuk ride to an ancient Shiva temple. We return to the ship for a farewell dinner. (BLD)

NOV 13 | PALLIPPURAM – KOCHI

We disembark in Pallippuram to witness Kalaripayattu, an ancient martial art, before transferring to an airport hotel for lunch and day-use accommodation before our evening flight home. *Courtyard by Marriott Kochi Airport - Day Use Room (BL)*

NOV 14 | ARRIVE CANADA

We arrive in Toronto as our memorable journey through Sri Lanka and Kerala comes to an end.

B: BREAKFAST (15) L: LUNCH (14) D: DINNER (15)

DID YOU KNOW?

Fort Kochi's Chinese fishing nets have lined the waterfront for more than five centuries, becoming one of Kerala's most recognizable cultural landmarks. Each net can span roughly 20 metres and hang from a structure about 10 metres high, creating the striking silhouettes that define the waterfront.



KOCHI

CRAIG TRAVEL INCLUSIONS

- International flights, domestic Canadian flights and airport transfers with air-inclusive packages
- Domestic flights within the destination
- Carefully selected accommodation as listed, or similar
- All sightseeing and entrance fees as described
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Dedicated journey leader, national guides, and local specialists where applicable
- All gratuities, surcharges, fees, and taxes
- International eSIM to keep you connected
- Visa support **and fees** for Canadian passport holders
- Free insurance quote (contact us for details)

TOUR & AIR COST

Land Only	\$9,195
Toronto	\$11,295
Ottawa / Montreal	\$11,385
Halifax / Winnipeg	\$11,535
Calgary / Edmonton / Vancouver	\$11,585
St. John's	\$11,585
Saskatoon / Regina	\$11,735
Victoria	\$11,635
Single Supplement (on request)	\$3,695

Deposit is \$1,500 per person
Final payment is due June 23, 2027



YOUR JOURNEY LEADERS

David Craig, Chairman of Craig Travel, and Roslyn bring decades of travel experience as both leaders and tour operators. After attending the University of Toronto and York University, David travelled the world and lived in Australia before returning to Canada and Craig Travel. For almost fifty years, he has devoted his career to arranging and operating tours and cruises worldwide. Australian-born Roslyn has spent most of her life in the travel industry. Together, they have led tours and cruises to over 100 countries and all seven continents, and look forward to sharing this exciting journey with you.



GIRAGAMA

Visit craigtravel.com/85 to learn more!

Prices are in Canadian dollars per person. Land-only members join at the hotel in Colombo and leave at the hotel in Kochi. Airfares from other gateways are available on request. Tour price is based on sharing a twin-bedded room. Prices are based on a minimum of 20 members and on rates, taxes and fees effective September 2026 and are subject to change due to factors beyond our control. Group to be escorted with a minimum of 16 members. For full terms and conditions, visit our website: craigtravel.com/terms-conditions. Comprehensive travel insurance is strongly recommended. Canadian passport holders require a visa for India and an online ETA for Sri Lanka.

Contact us or visit our website to learn more and reserve your place.

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