



Sri Lanka

A teardrop-shaped island of tea hills, ancient Buddhist cities, golden beaches and wild elephants, where every meal starts with rice and a table full of curries.

AT A GLANCE

Facts to know

CAPITAL

Colombo

LEGISLATIVE CAPITAL

Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, on the eastern edge of Colombo, where Parliament has met since 1982. Colombo is the largest city and the executive and judicial capital

POPULATION

About 21.8 million (2024 census)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Sinhala and Tamil. The constitution names English as the link language, and it is widely used in business and education

CURRENCY

Sri Lankan rupee (LKR)

AREA

About 65,600 km²

GOVERNMENT

Unitary semi-presidential republic, divided into 9 provinces and 25 districts. The president is elected by the people for five years

HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

Pidurutalagala, 2,524 m, near Nuwara Eliya. Its summit is a closed military area; the best-known mountain is Adam's Peak, 2,243 m

LONGEST RIVER

The Mahaweli, about 335 km, which rises in the central hills and reaches the sea near Trincomalee

NEIGHBOURS

No land borders. India lies across the Palk Strait to the northwest, and the Maldives lie across the sea to the southwest

DRIVES ON THE

Left

CALLING CODE

+94

A 45-minute trip to Sri Lanka

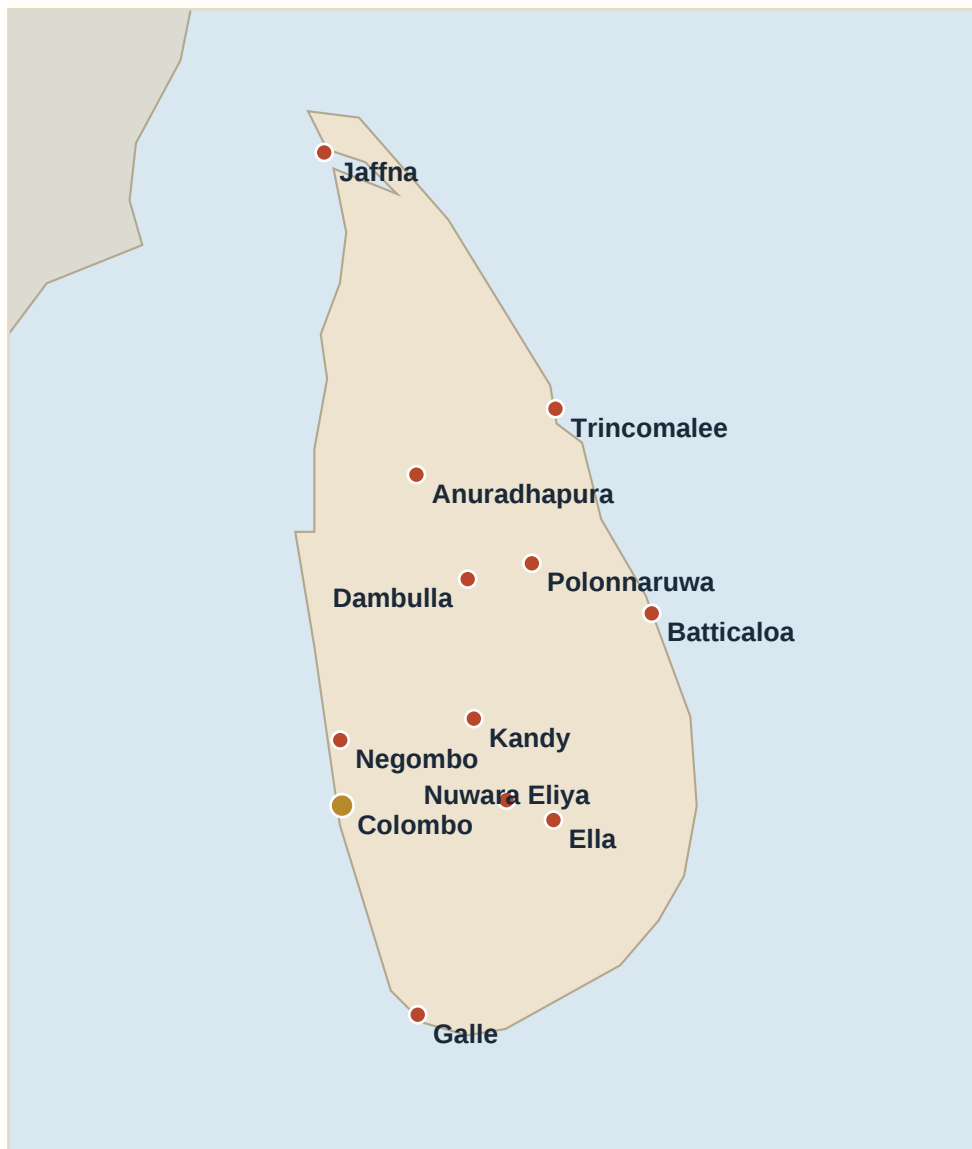
Everything you need is in this pack. No preparation beyond printing. Adapt the timing to your group.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 0 to 5 min | Welcome. Show the map page and find Sri Lanka together. Ask: who has been there, or knows someone from there? |
| 5 to 15 min | Read the facts at a glance, then three moments from the story: 543 BC: Prince Vijaya arrives, according to legend; 1867: The first tea estate; 2009: The civil war ends. |
| 15 to 25 min | At the table: talk about Rice and curry and Parippu (dhal curry).
Idea: bring a small taste (bread, cheese, fruit, tea) if your kitchen can help. |
| 25 to 30 min | Say it like a local: practise "Ayubowan" (Hello, and also goodbye (literally 'may you live long')), "Kohomada?" (How are you?), "Hondin innawa, sthuthiyi" (I'm fine, thank you). Everyone says them together. |
| 30 to 40 min | Quiz: read the questions aloud, or play the big-screen version at https://worldstroll.com/countries/sri-lanka/group . No scores needed. |
| 40 to 45 min | Talk about it (questions page), then stamp or sign everyone's passport page. |

You will need

- This printed pack (one per table, or one each)
- Pens for the quiz
- Optional: a world map or globe, a small tasting, music from the country

Sri Lanka and its cities



- Colombo (Western Province): Galle Face Green, a seafront park laid out in 1859, The busy markets of the Pettah, Gangaramaya Temple and the colonial buildings of the Fort district
- Negombo (Western Province): Fishing boats and a busy fish market, Churches, giving it the nickname 'Little Rome', The Negombo Lagoon
- Kandy (Central Province): The Temple of the Tooth Relic, The Esala Perahera procession with elephants in July and August, The Royal Botanic Gardens at Peradeniya
- Nuwara Eliya (Central Province): High-grown tea and tea factories, Colonial buildings and a cool climate, Nearby Horton Plains and its World's End cliff
- Ella (Uva Province): The Nine Arch Bridge, Walks up Little Adam's Peak and Ella Rock, The hill country train ride
- Galle (Southern Province): Galle Fort and its ramparts, Dutch colonial streets and

churches, Nearby beaches and whale watching at Mirissa

- Dambulla (Central Province): The Dambulla cave temple, Being a base for Sigiriya, Its central place in the Cultural Triangle of ancient cities
- Anuradhapura (North Central Province): The Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi, a sacred fig tree, Huge white and brick stupas such as the Ruwanwelisaya, Ancient reservoirs called tanks
- Polonnaruwa (North Central Province): The Gal Vihara rock statues, The Parakrama Samudra reservoir, Royal palace and temple ruins
- Trincomalee (Eastern Province): Koneswaram temple on Swami Rock, The natural harbour and Fort Frederick, Beaches north of the town
- Batticaloa (Eastern Province): The lagoon and its 'singing fish', Kallady Bridge, Pasikudah beach, about 35 km away
- Jaffna (Northern Province): Nallur Kandaswamy Temple and its summer festival, Jaffna Fort, rebuilt by the Dutch, The Jaffna Public Library, burnt in 1981 and rebuilt

A short history of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's chronicles, above all the Mahavamsa, tell the island's story for more than two thousand years. It is a history of great Buddhist kingdoms in the dry north, of irrigation works that still water the rice fields, of spice traders and European fleets, of tea, independence, a long civil war and recovery.

543 BC Prince Vijaya arrives, according to legend

Sinhalese history traditionally begins in 543 BC, when the semi-legendary Prince Vijaya, sent away from his home in Vanga, in today's Bengal, landed near today's Mannar with 700 followers. The island's chronicles count him as the first of about 189 kings. Archaeology shows that people had lived here for many thousands of years before.

250 BC Buddhism arrives with Mahinda

Around 250 BC the monk Mahinda, a son of the Indian emperor Ashoka, came to Mihintale and won over King Devanampiya Tissa, who ruled from Anuradhapura. Soon after, Mahinda's sister, the nun Sanghamitta, brought a cutting of the tree under which the Buddha was enlightened. Buddhism has shaped the island's culture ever since.

AD 477 King Kashyapa builds Sigiriya

King Kashyapa, who reigned in the late 5th century until 495, moved his capital to a huge granite rock at Sigiriya. He built a palace on the summit, painted frescoes on the rock face and made a gateway in the shape of a giant lion. After his death the palace was abandoned and the site became a Buddhist monastery.

1070 Vijayabahu I drives out the Cholas

From 993 armies of the Chola empire of southern India overran the north and destroyed Anuradhapura, which had been the capital for more than a thousand years, and by 1017 they held most of the island. After a 17-year campaign, King Vijayabahu I drove them out in 1070 and ruled a reunited island from Polonnaruwa, which remained the capital.

1153 Parakramabahu the Great comes to the throne

Parakramabahu I, who reigned from 1153 to 1186, is remembered as one of the island's greatest kings. He built or repaired hundreds of

reservoirs and canals, including the vast Parakrama Samudra lake at Polonnaruwa, and had the Buddha statues of the Gal Vihara carved in the rock.

1505 **The Portuguese arrive**

In 1505 the Portuguese captain Lourenço de Almeida reached the island. The Portuguese built a fort in Colombo in 1517 and gradually took control of the coasts, where they traded in cinnamon and spread Catholicism. The inland kingdom of Kandy stayed independent.

1656 **The Dutch take Colombo**

The king of Kandy made a treaty with the Dutch East India Company in 1638 to push out the Portuguese. The Dutch took Colombo in 1656 and the last Portuguese strongholds in 1658, but then kept the coast for themselves. Dutch rule left forts, canals, Roman-Dutch law and the Burgher community.

1815 **The British take Kandy**

Britain took over the Dutch coastal lands from 1796. In February 1815 British forces entered Kandy, and on 2 March 1815 the Kandyan chiefs signed the Kandyan Convention, handing the kingdom to the British Crown. The last king, Sri Vikrama Rajasinha, was sent into exile in India, and the whole island became the colony of Ceylon.

1867 **The first tea estate**

Coffee was the colony's main crop until a leaf disease destroyed the plantations from 1869. In 1867 the Scottish planter James Taylor had started the first tea plantation at Loolecondera estate, about 35 km southeast of Kandy, and tea soon replaced coffee. In the 19th century many Tamil workers were brought from southern India to work on the estates, and Ceylon tea became famous around the world.

1931 **Votes for all adults**

The Donoughmore Constitution of 1931 gave the vote to all adults, men and women, at a time when only about 4 percent of the population had been able to vote. It was the first time a non-European colony of a Western European empire was given one person, one vote.

1948 **Independence as Ceylon**

On 4 February 1948 Ceylon became independent as a dominion within the Commonwealth, with the British monarch still as head of state. Independence Day is celebrated every year on 4 February.

1960

The world's first woman prime minister

On 21 July 1960 Sirimavo Bandaranaike was sworn in as prime minister of Ceylon, the first woman in the world to lead a government as prime minister. She served three terms in all.

1972

Ceylon becomes Sri Lanka

In 1972 a new constitution made the country a republic and changed its name from Ceylon to Sri Lanka. A second constitution in 1978 created a powerful elected presidency and the formal name used today, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

1983

The civil war begins

Tensions between the government and parts of the Tamil minority had grown since independence. In July 1983 an attack by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who wanted a separate Tamil state in the north and east, was followed by deadly anti-Tamil riots, and the conflict became a civil war. Many thousands of Tamils left the country.

2004

The Indian Ocean tsunami

On 26 December 2004 a tsunami caused by a huge earthquake off Sumatra struck the eastern, southern and southwestern coasts. More than 35,000 people died in Sri Lanka, including an estimated 900 to 1,700 people on a coastal train near Hikkaduwa, and hundreds of thousands lost their homes.

2009

The civil war ends

In May 2009 the army defeated the LTTE and the 26-year war ended. The United Nations estimated that 80,000 to 100,000 people died over the whole war. The final months, when many civilians were trapped in the fighting, have been examined by the United Nations, and reconciliation is still a national task.

What people eat in Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan cooking is built on rice and coconut, with plenty of fish, spices and chilli. The everyday meal is rice and curry: a mound of rice in the middle and several small dishes around it, usually a fish or meat curry, a lentil curry, one or two vegetable curries, a green mallung, a sambol and crisp papadams. Breakfast and dinner are often hoppers, string hoppers, pittu or roti with curry. Cinnamon, which is native to the island, black pepper, curry leaves, pandan, goraka and Maldives fish give the food its own taste, and Indian, Malay, Arab, Portuguese and Dutch traders all left dishes behind. Tea, usually with milk and a lot of sugar, is drunk all day.

Rice and curry (Bath curry)

The whole country

The national everyday meal, eaten at lunch in homes, offices and roadside eateries. White or red rice is served with a spread of small curries: fish, chicken or beef, lentils, jackfruit, beans, pumpkin or aubergine, plus a sambol, a pickle and papadams. Each curry has its own colour and taste, from mild and creamy with coconut milk to dark, roasted and fiery.

Parippu (dhal curry) (Parippu)

The whole country

A mild, golden curry of red lentils cooked with turmeric, onion, green chilli and coconut milk, then finished with fried mustard seeds, curry leaves and onion. It is served with rice and curry, hoppers and bread, and is often the first curry children learn to love.

Pol sambol (Pol sambola)

The whole country

A fresh coconut relish of grated coconut, red onion, chilli, lime juice and salt, often with a pinch of Maldives fish, a smoked and dried tuna. It is bright red, spicy and sour, and appears beside rice, hoppers, string hoppers and bread at almost every meal.

Mallung (Mallum)

The whole country

Finely shredded green leaves, such as gotu kola, cassava leaves or water spinach, tossed briefly in a hot pan with grated coconut, shallots, green chilli, turmeric and a little Maldives fish. It is eaten at almost every rice and curry meal and is how many families get their daily greens.

Kiribath (milk rice) (Kiribath)

The whole country, above all Sinhalese homes

Rice cooked in coconut milk until it sets, then flattened on a plate and cut into diamond shapes. It is eaten on the first day of each month and for every happy beginning: weddings, a new job, a new house and, above all, as the first meal of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year in April. It is served with lunu miris, a fiery onion and chilli paste, or with jaggery.

Hoppers and egg hoppers (Appa, biththara appa)

The whole country

Bowl-shaped pancakes made from a fermented batter of rice flour and coconut milk, cooked in a small round pan so that the edges are thin and crisp and the centre soft. For an egg hopper, an egg is cracked into the middle and cooks in the steam. Hoppers are eaten for breakfast or dinner with pol sambol, lunu miris and curry.

String hoppers (Indi appa, idiyappam)

The whole country

Small nests of thin rice-flour noodles, pressed through a mould onto little woven mats and steamed. They are eaten in stacks for breakfast or dinner with a thin coconut-milk curry called kiri hodi, a dhal curry and pol sambol.

Pittu (Pittu, puttu)

Jaffna and the Tamil north and east, now the whole country

Cylinders of rice or wheat flour layered with grated coconut and steamed in a bamboo or metal tube. Pittu is a favourite breakfast of Sri Lankan Tamils and is eaten with coconut milk, sambol and a spicy fish or chicken curry, crumbled and mixed together with the fingers.

Kottu roti (Kottu)

The east coast (Batticaloa and Trincomalee), now the whole country

Flat godamba roti chopped into strips on a hot griddle with vegetables, egg, chilli and chicken, beef or seafood, and mixed with curry sauce. The cooks chop with two metal blades, and the rhythmic clatter tells you from far away that a kottu shop is open for the evening.

Lamprais

The Dutch Burgher community, Colombo

A packet of rice cooked in rich meat stock, with a curry of several meats, ash plantain and aubergine curry, seeni sambol (sweet onion relish), prawn paste and Dutch-style frikkadel meatballs, all wrapped in a banana leaf and baked. Opening the parcel releases a wonderful smell.

Hot butter cuttlefish

Sri Lankan Chinese restaurants, now the whole country

Pieces of cuttlefish scored in a criss-cross pattern, dipped in flour, deep-fried and then tossed with butter, chilli flakes, peppers and spring onions. It is served as a 'bite' with drinks or as part of a meal, especially in beach restaurants.

Watalappam

The Malay and Muslim communities, now the whole country

A rich, dark custard pudding of coconut milk, eggs and kithul jaggery, spiced with cardamom, cloves and nutmeg and topped with cashew nuts. It is the dessert of Eid for Sri Lankan Muslims and is served at weddings and celebrations across the island.

Kavum (Kevum)

The whole country, above all at the New Year

Small deep-fried oil cakes of rice flour and kithul treacle. The best-known kind, konda kavum, has a knot on top like hair tied in a bun. Kavum are made in large batches for the Sinhala and Tamil New Year in mid-April and shared with neighbours.

Kokis

The whole country, above all at the New Year

Crisp, lacy, flower-shaped fritters made by dipping a patterned iron mould into a batter of rice flour and coconut milk and then into hot oil. They are slightly salty rather than sweet and are one of the essential New Year treats.

Curd and treacle (Kiri pani)

The whole country

Thick, slightly sour buffalo curd, set in a clay pot, served with a generous pour of kithul treacle, a dark syrup made from the sap of the fishtail palm. It has been eaten as a dessert since ancient times and is a simple treat found all over the island.

Ceylon tea (Thé)

The central highlands

Black tea from the island's hill country, from the high estates around Nuwara Eliya to the lower gardens near Galle and Ratnapura. At home and in cafés it is usually served with milk and plenty of sugar. If you want it without milk, ask for 'plain tea'.

GOOD MANNERS

At the table

- Most Sri Lankans eat rice and curry with the right hand, mixing a little rice with each curry using the fingertips. Every restaurant will bring a spoon and fork if you

ask, but it is worth trying the local way.

- Use your right hand to eat and to pass or receive food, money and gifts. The left hand is used for washing and is not used for eating.
- Sri Lankan food can be very spicy. To ask for a milder dish, say 'særa aduwata', which means 'less strong'.
- On Poya days, the full moon holiday each month, the sale of alcohol and meat is forbidden and many shops close, so plan ahead.
- At the Sinhala and Tamil New Year in April, the first meal of kiribath is eaten at an auspicious time chosen by astrologers, and families visit each other with plates of kavum, kokis and other sweets.
- Snack shops and bakeries sell 'short eats', such as patties, Chinese rolls and pastries, bought by the dozen for tea time, parties and journeys.

Parippu (dhal curry)

A mild, golden curry of red lentils cooked with turmeric, onion, green chilli and coconut milk, then finished with fried mustard seeds, curry leaves and onion. It is served with rice and curry, hoppers and bread, and is often the first curry children learn to love.

Ingredients

- 200 g split red lentils (masoor dal), rinsed
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 green chilli, slit lengthwise
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 200 ml coconut milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- For the tempering: 1 tablespoon coconut or vegetable oil, 1/2 teaspoon mustard seeds, a small handful of curry leaves, 1 small onion, sliced, 1 dried red chilli, broken

Method

1. Put the lentils in a pan with the chopped onion, garlic, green chilli, turmeric and about 500 ml of water. Bring to the boil and skim off any foam.
2. Simmer, half covered, for about 20 minutes, stirring now and then, until the lentils are soft and falling apart. Add a little more water if it gets too thick.
3. Stir in the coconut milk and the salt and simmer gently for 5 more minutes. Do not let it boil hard.
4. In a small pan, heat the oil and add the mustard seeds. When they pop, add the curry leaves, sliced onion and dried chilli and fry until the onion is golden.
5. Pour the hot tempering over the lentils, stir and serve with rice or bread.

Pol sambol

A fresh coconut relish of grated coconut, red onion, chilli, lime juice and salt, often with a pinch of Maldives fish, a smoked and dried tuna. It is bright red, spicy and sour, and appears beside rice, hoppers, string hoppers and bread at almost every meal.

Ingredients

- 200 g freshly grated coconut, or 150 g desiccated coconut soaked in 100 ml warm water for 10 minutes
- 1 small red onion or 4 shallots, very finely chopped
- 1 to 2 teaspoons chilli flakes or chilli powder, to taste
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Optional: 1 tablespoon Maldives fish flakes or a pinch of crushed dried shrimp

Method

1. Put the onion, chilli and salt in a mortar, or in a bowl, and crush them together with the pestle or the back of a spoon until juicy.
2. Add the coconut and the Maldives fish, if using, and rub everything together with your fingers until the coconut turns an even pink-red.
3. Squeeze in the lime juice, mix and taste. Add more salt, chilli or lime until it is sharp, salty and hot.
4. Serve the same day with rice and curry, hoppers or bread.

Kiribath (milk rice)

Rice cooked in coconut milk until it sets, then flattened on a plate and cut into diamond shapes. It is eaten on the first day of each month and for every happy beginning: weddings, a new job, a new house and, above all, as the first meal of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year in April. It is served with lunu miris, a fiery onion and chilli paste, or with jaggery.

Ingredients

- 300 g short-grain white rice (Sri Lankan samba or pudding rice)
- 600 ml water
- 400 ml thick coconut milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- To serve: lunu miris (chilli, onion and lime paste), or grated jaggery or brown sugar

Method

1. Rinse the rice, put it in a heavy pan with the water, bring to the boil and simmer, covered, for about 15 minutes, until the rice is soft and the water is absorbed.
2. Stir in the coconut milk and salt. Cook on a low heat, stirring all the time, for about 10 minutes, until the rice is thick, creamy and pulls away from the sides of the pan.
3. Tip the rice onto a flat plate and press it into an even layer about 3 cm thick with a banana leaf or the back of a spoon.
4. Leave it to cool for 10 minutes, then cut it into diamond shapes and serve warm.

Watalappam

A rich, dark custard pudding of coconut milk, eggs and kithul jaggery, spiced with cardamom, cloves and nutmeg and topped with cashew nuts. It is the dessert of Eid for Sri Lankan Muslims and is served at weddings and celebrations across the island.

Ingredients

- 200 g kithul or palm jaggery, or dark brown sugar, grated
- 400 ml thick coconut milk
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
- A pinch each of ground nutmeg, ground cloves and salt
- A handful of cashew nuts

Method

1. Heat the oven to 160 °C. Put a roasting tin half filled with hot water on the middle shelf.
2. Warm the jaggery with 3 tablespoons of water in a small pan until it melts, then let it cool a little.
3. Beat the eggs in a bowl without making too much froth. Stir in the coconut milk, the melted jaggery, the spices and the salt, then strain the mixture through a sieve.
4. Pour into a heatproof dish or small cups and scatter the cashews on top.
5. Set the dish in the water bath and bake for 45 to 50 minutes, until the custard is set all the way through and only wobbles slightly in the centre. Cool, then chill before serving.

Useful phrases

Ayubowan

AH-yu-boh-wun · Hello, and also goodbye (literally 'may you live long')

Kohomada?

KOH-hoh-muh-duh · How are you?

Hondin innawa, sthuthiyi

HON-din IN-nuh-wuh, STOO-ti-yi · I'm fine, thank you

Mage nama ...

MAH-geh NUH-muh ... · My name is ...

Sthuthiyi

STOO-ti-yi · Thank you

Karunakarala

kuh-roo-NAH-kuh-ruh-luh · Please

Samavenna

suh-MAH-wen-nuh · Excuse me, sorry

Mata therenne n

MUH-tuh TAY-ren-neh NAA · I don't understand

Meka kiyada?

MAY-kuh KEE-yuh-duh · How much is this?

Væsikiliya kohedha?

WA-si-ki-li-yuh KOH-heh-duh · Where is the toilet?

Særa aduwata

SA-ruh UH-du-wuh-tuh · Less spicy, please (literally 'less strong')

Adu sini

UH-du SEE-ni · Less sugar

Mama mas malu kanne n

MUH-muh MUSS MAH-lu KUN-neh NAA · I don't eat meat or fish (I'm vegetarian)

Kma rasata thibuna

KAA-muh RUH-suh-tuh TI-bu-nuh · The food was delicious

Suba udsanak

SU-buh u-DAA-suh-nuk · Good morning

Suba rathriyak

SU-buh RAH-tri-yuk · Good night

Gihin ennam

GI-hin EN-num · Goodbye (literally 'I'll go and come back')

Udav karanna!

u-DUV kuh-RUN-nuh · Help!

Vanakkam (Tamil)

vuh-NUK-kum · Hello, in Tamil

Nandri (Tamil)

NUN-dri · Thank you, in Tamil

Things you might not know

1. The English word 'serendipity' comes from Serendip, an old Persian and Arabic name for Sri Lanka.
2. In 1960 Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Ceylon became the first woman in the world to serve as prime minister.
3. The sacred fig tree Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi in Anuradhapura was planted more than 2,200 years ago and is considered the oldest living tree planted by people with a known planting date.
4. True cinnamon, *Cinnamomum verum*, is native to Sri Lanka, and its old scientific name, *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*, refers to Ceylon.
5. Tea was first planted as a crop here in 1867. As of 2019, Sri Lanka was the world's fourth largest tea producer, and its tea is still sold as Ceylon tea.
6. Sri Lanka won the Cricket World Cup in 1996, beating Australia in the final in Lahore. Cricket is by far the most popular sport, although volleyball was declared the official national sport in 1991.
7. Sri Lanka is thought to have the highest density of wild elephants in Asia, and the Sri Lankan elephant is the largest subspecies of the Asian elephant.
8. Adam's Peak is sacred to four religions: Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians each have their own story about the footprint near its summit.
9. Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka wrote down the Pali Canon, the scriptures of Theravada Buddhism, in the 1st century BC, after they had been passed on by memory for centuries.
10. The country has two capitals side by side: Colombo, the executive and judicial capital, and Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, the legislative capital, where Parliament sits on an island in a lake.
11. Sri Lanka has two monsoons that bring rain to different coasts at different times of year, so there is almost always good weather somewhere on the island.
12. The Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage, founded in 1975, has the largest herd of captive elephants in the world: 71 elephants in 2023.
13. Sri Lanka has provided free education from primary school up to university

since the 1940s.

- 14.** As of 2026, Sri Lanka has eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites: six cultural and two natural.

TALK ABOUT IT

Questions for the group

- Have you ever been to Sri Lanka, or has someone in your family? What do you remember?
- Have you ever tasted Rice and curry or Parippu (dhal curry)? What is a dish you remember from a trip?
- Ceylon becomes Sri Lanka (1972). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- The civil war begins (1983). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Have you seen Sigiriya, the Lion Rock, in person or in pictures? Which famous place would you most like to see?
- If you could spend one day in any city of Sri Lanka, which would it be and why?

QUIZ

How well do you know Sri Lanka?

Circle the right answer. The answers are on the last page.

1. How do you say 'thank you' in Sinhala?

- A) Kohomada?
- B) Sthuthiyi
- C) Ayubowan
- D) Samavenna

2. Tap water in Sri Lanka is safe for visitors to drink.

- A) True
- B) False

3. Lamprais, rice and curries baked in a banana leaf, comes from which community?

- A) The Dutch Burghers
- B) The Parsis
- C) The Vedda
- D) The Chinese

4. Watalappam is a custard pudding made with coconut milk, eggs and jaggery.

- A) True
- B) False

5. What was Sri Lanka's official name until 1972?

- A) Siam
- B) Ceylon
- C) Burma
- D) Formosa

6. What does the Sinhala word 'pol' mean, as in pol sambol?

- A) Coconut
- B) Fish
- C) Rice
- D) Chilli

7. Which beach town near the airport is nicknamed 'Little Rome' for its many churches?

- A) Trincomalee
- B) Ella
- C) Negombo
- D) Jaffna

8. In Sri Lanka, traffic drives on the left.

- A) True
- B) False

9. Which kingdom, taken by the British in 1815, was the last independent kingdom on the island?

- A) Anuradhapura
- B) Jaffna
- C) Kandy
- D) Polonnaruwa

10. Adam's Peak is a holy place for Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

- A) True
- B) False

11. On Poya days, the monthly full moon holidays, the sale of alcohol and meat is forbidden in Sri Lanka.

- A) True
- B) False

12. In a Sri Lankan café, what do you get if you ask for 'plain tea'?

- A) Tea without sugar
- B) Tea without milk
- C) Green tea
- D) Iced tea

Quiz answers

1. B) Sthuthiyi

Sthuthiyi means thank you. Ayubowan is hello, samavenna is excuse me and kohomada? is how are you?

2. False

False. Drink sealed bottled water, or try a fresh king coconut.

3. A) The Dutch Burghers

Lamprais comes from the Dutch Burghers; the name comes from the Dutch lomprijst, roughly 'a lump of rice'.

4. True

True. It is spiced with cardamom and nutmeg, and it is the traditional Eid dessert of Sri Lankan Muslims.

5. B) Ceylon

The country was called Ceylon until 1972, when it became a republic named Sri Lanka. Siam is the old name of Thailand, Burma of Myanmar and Formosa of Taiwan.

6. A) Coconut

Pol means coconut, so pol sambol is a coconut relish. Rice is bath, chilli is miris and fish is malu.

7. C) Negombo

Negombo, about 38 km north of Colombo, has a large Catholic population and many churches, hence 'Little Rome'.

8. True

True. Sri Lanka drives on the left, like India and the United Kingdom.

9. C) Kandy

The Kingdom of Kandy was the last. The British entered Kandy in February 1815, and the Kandyan Convention handed it to the British Crown.

10. True

True. Each of the four religions has its own story about the footprint near the summit.

11. True

True. Poya is a Buddhist holiday every full moon; many shops close, and alcohol and meat are not sold.

12. B) Tea without milk

Plain tea means tea without milk. It is usually still sweet, so ask for 'adu sini' if you want less sugar.

Sri Lanka visa page

Name: _____ Date: _____



Next stops

Country: _____	Country: _____	Country: _____
Country: _____	Country: _____	Country: _____

Play the interactive version, collect a stamp in your passport:

<https://worldstroll.com/countries/sri-lanka>