TOUR CODE

IA15

ADVENTURESABROAD

INDIA & SRI LANKA

Featuring South India & North Extension

28 days

Updated 01/11/2013

Day 1 ***Arrival in Delhi***

Arrive in Delhi and transfer to our hotel.

Overnight in Delhi. Meal plan: Dinner, if required.

Day 2 ***Delhi: City Tour***

Today we have a full-day tour of Delhi.* We start with a drive north into Old Delhi, passing along the Rajpath (King's Way) and stopping for photos at the India Gate. The 42m high India Gate, an "Arc de Triomphe"-like archway in the middle of a crossroad, commemorates the Indian soldiers who lost their lives fighting for the British Army during WWI. This landmark also bears the names of British and Indian soldiers killed in the Northwestern frontier in the Afghan War of 1919.

Next we will make a visit to the Jamma Mosque. Located in the heart of Old Delhi, the largest mosque in India can accommodate as many as twenty-thousand worshippers. This imposing architectural monument, with it's three gateways and two minarets, took fourteen years to complete (1644-58). Time permitting we will enter to have a brief look inside.

From here we board our cycle rickshaws for a tour of Chandni Chowk (Silver Street). Here we are given a glimpse into an old world lifestyle slowly fading from Delhi. The hustle and bustle of everyday life can be felt in the Chandi Chowk's narrow lanes. We will reboard our bus after the rickshaw ride, going past the Red Fort (photo stop), and we disembark at the Raj Ghat, set within a beautiful park. This national monument is where the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, was cremated.

After a stop for lunch we continue our sightseeing with a visit to Humayan's Tomb, an excellent example of Mughal architecture, predating the Taj Mahal by almost 100 years. Persian in style, this is a beautiful red sandstone building inlaid with black and white marble.

We will finish our day with a visit to the Qutub Minar. Few other monuments are as closely identified with Delhi as the Qutub Minar, this first monument of Muslim rule in India. It heralded the beginning of a new style of art and architecture which came to be know as the Indo-Islamic.

* Today's acitivities may be managed by our expert local Delhi guide. You will meet your Tour Leader, and possibly other group members, arriving from a longer tour option tomorrow.

Overnight in Delhi. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 3 ***Delhi - Gwalior***

After an early breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the Railway Station to board the Shatabdi Express train to Gwalior. We

are met on arrival and transfer to the hotel.

This afternoon we visit the Gwalior Fort.* The fort's walls and buildings were constructed by different generations of rulers. The most notable are the Suraj Kund, a tank built in the 8th century AD, two 11th century temples known as Sas Bahu ka Mandir, dedicated to Vishnu; the 16th century Gujri Mahal Palace and the Hindola Gate, which houses a small archeological museum. Later visit Jai Vilas Palace and Museum, located in the city. The enormous Jai Vilas Palace, built in the 19th century, has a pair of the world's heaviest chandeliers in the Durbar Hall and a crystal staircase. The dining table is fitted with an electric train made of silver, which carried brandy and cigars around the table after dinner.

* The start time of today's tour may depend on the arrival of your Tour Leader and other group members arriving from Agra on a longer tour option.

Overnight in Gwalior. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 4 *Gwalior - Orchha*

After breakfast, we travel to Orchha by road.

In the afternoon we visit Orchha. Founded in the 16th century by the Bundela king, Rudhra Pratap, on the banks of the Betwa River, Orchha is a medieval city frozen in time and space, existing even today as it must have done in the 16th and 17th centuries, when it was built. The countryside undulates gently between riverine plains and rolling forest-clad hills and the landscape is dotted with palaces and temples, a fortress and cenotaphs. The architecture is a synthesis of traditional Hindu, hybrid Indo-Saracenic and ornate Mughal. One of the finest sights is the view of the cenotaphs from across the Betwa River. We visit the Jehangir Mahal, the most grandiose structure in Orchha; the Raja Mahal Rai Praveen Mahal.

Overnight in Orchha. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 5 *Orchha - Khajuraho*

After breakfast we drive to Khajuraho, renowned for its fine temples.

In the afternoon we visit the temples. Built between 950 and 1050 AD, they are among the most creative examples of Indian architecture. Only 22 of the original 85 temples survive today. The most popular theme is woman: reflective, playful, and amorous. The carvings also depict gods in cosmic evolution, griffins, nymphs, beasts, demons in revolt and the several emotions of man -- fear, doubt, jealousy, ardent love and consummate passion.

The western group, contained within a fenced enclosure, is well-maintained as a park. The large Lakshmana Temple is dedicated to Vishnu and is one of the earliest of the western enclosure temples, dating from 930-950 AD. It is also one of the best preserved, with a full five-part floor plan and four subsidiary shrines. The Vahara Temple, dedicated to Vishnu's boar incarnation (Vahara avatar) faces the Matangesvara Temple and has a huge solid and intricately carved figure of the boar incarnation, dating from around 900 AD. The Kandariya Mahadev Temple is not only the largest but also artistically and architecturally the most perfect. Build between 1025 and 1050 AD; it represents Chandela at its finest. The Mahadeva Temple is small and mainly ruined. However, it houses one of Khajuraho’s best sculptures -- a fine sardula figure caressing a lion. The Devi Jagadamba Temple was probably originally dedicated to Vishnu, but later changed to Parvati and then Kali. The Chitragupta Temple is unique in being dedicated to the Sun God, Surya. The Matangesvara Temple, standing next to the Lakshmana Temple, is not within the fenced enclose, because it is still in everyday use, unlike all the old temples.

Overnight in Khajuraho. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 6 *Khajuraho - Varanasi & Sarnath*

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the hotel. Late morning transfer to the airport for the flight to Varanasi.

This afternoon we visit Sarnath.* Located 9 km from Varanasi, it the centre of the Buddhist world, just as Varanasi is that for the Hindu. It was here that Buddha preached his first sermon, partially recorded on one of its stones. Dhamek Stupa dating back to 500 AD, is the largest with geometrical ornaments on its wall. Dharmarajika Stupa was set up by emperor Ashoka to contain the bodily relics of the Buddha.

Later in the evening, watch the spectacular aarti (religious ceremony) when thousands of butter lamps are lit and set afloat on the sacred Ganges Return to the hotel for the night.

* Varying flight times may require that we visit Sarnath tomorrow prior to flying to Mumbai.

Overnight in Varanasi. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 7 *Varanasi Touring - Mumbai*

Before sunrise we take a boat ride on the sacred Ganges River, where devout Hindus can be seen performing their daily ablutions. The bathing ghats, over 5 km in length, lead down from a steep bank to the river, are the soul of the city. Return to the hotel for breakfast.

Later we walk through an inextricable maze of small streets and alleyways, hiding in disorderly array no less than 2,000 temples and shrines. Domes, pinnacles, towers and derelict 18th-century palaces dominate the left bank of the Ganges River. The streets are noisy, colour is rife. Varanasi is the religious capital of the Hindu faith since the dawn of history. Known as Kashi in the 7th century BC it constitutes a microcosm of Indian life. No one knows how old it really is -- when Buddha came here in 550 BC, it was already a flourishing ancient settlement. Visit some of the more important temples such as the Bharat Mata Mandir and the Durga Temple. Go past the beautiful Tulsi Manas temple. Take a walk down Vishwanathji Ki Gali -- the ancient alley which is home to some beautiful temples. Here you will find shops that sell every conceivable item required in a temple.

Afternoon transfer to the airport foryour flight to Mumbai (formerly Bombay).

Overnight in Mumbai. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 8 *Mumbai: City Tour - Goa*

This morning we depart on a tour of Mumbai.

From humble obscure beginnings as a set of seven small islands, Mumbai has today risen to the eminence of India's most important commercial and industrial centre. At Dhobi Ghat, you can see a bewildering range of India’s contrasts. The dhobis (washermen) deal with staggeringly large washes every day. The Gateway of India was conceived as a triumphal arch to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary for the Delhi Durbar in 1911. The city has several fine examples of colonial architecture including the Afghan Memorial Church, established in 1847 which has Gothic arches and stained-glass windows; the Clock Tower - now called Rajabai Tower, the School of Art, built in the late 1800s, where Rudyard Kipling was born; Crawford Market which has bas-reliefs designed by Kipling's father; the

massive Victoria Terminus and the Municipal Corporation building. Also of interest are the Hanging Gardens on Malabar Hill, from where you get a magnificent panoramic view of the metropolis and the Arabian Sea. Marine Drive is a long gracefully curving road along the buttressed seacoast.

Later today we fly to the former Portuguese enclave of Goa.

Goa achieved fame when Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama sailed down the Malabar Coast in 1498 in search of "Christians and spices." Although he found neither, Goa became a Portuguese colony separated from the rest of India by the jungle covered hills of the Western Ghats. Goa's heartland and population is located in the alluvial strip inland from the beaches, a lush patchwork of paddy fields, coconut plantations, whitewashed churches and gently meandering rivers.

Overnight in Goa. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 9 *Goa Tour*

This morning we include a sightseeing tour of Panjim. Proceeding to old Goa, we visit the Basilica of Bom Jesus, built in 1605 by the Jesuit fathers and still the most important church in Goa. Enshrined in a silver casket in one of its chapels, is the body of Saint Francis Xavier. Across the street is the Se Cathedral with an imposing vaulted roof, massive pillars and fourteen magnificent altars. Later we visit the Convent of St. Francis D'Assisi and the Chapel of St. Catherine.

This afternoon is free to enjoy this laid-back town.

Overnight in Goa. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 10 *Goa - Badami*

Today we travel to Badami, arriving early afternoon.

On arrival we visit Badami. Sculpted out of solid rock, the temples are adorned with dwarfs, an 18-armed Shiva, a Nandi bull, Lord Vishnu and the goddess Durga. The famed Durga Temple represents the blending of southern and northern styles of architecture.

Overnight in Badami. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 11 *Badami - Aihole - Patadakkal - Hospet*

We travel by road to Hospet.

We make a stop at Aihole. The seventy temples at Aihole exemplify Hindu medieval art. The Durga temple with its pyramidal roof has some remarkable sculpture, and the Jain Meguti temple is composed of 630 small stone blocks.

We also visit Patadakkal, the place where the Chalukuan kings had their coronation ceremonies. The ceiling of the Papanath temple, built around 680 AD, has a carved smiling Shiva, appearing to bless with his outstretched palm from whatever direction he is viewed. The Virupaksha Temple is a curious figure -- an elephant on one side and a buffalo on the other.

Continue to Hospet.

Overnight in Hospet. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 12 *Hospet - Hampi - Hospet*

After breakfast we depart for a day trip to Hampi, the seat of the famed Vijayanagara Empire, which was the capital of the largest empire in post-Mughal India, covering several states. Although in ruins today, this capital city once boasted riches known far beyond the shores of India. The ruins of Hampi of the 14th Century lies scattered in about 26 sq. km area, amidst giant boulders and vegetation. Protected by the tempestuous river Tungabhadra in the north and rocky granite ridges on the other three sides, the ruins silently narrate the story of grandeur splendour and fabulous wealth. The splendid remains of palaces and gateways of the broken city tell a tale of man's infinite talent and power of creativity together with his capacity for senseless destruction.

Return to Hospet.

Overnight in Hospet. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 13 *Hospet - Hassan*

After an early breakfast, depart on the long but interesting drive through rural Karnataka to Hassan. Upon arrival check-in at the hotel.

Overnight in Hassan. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 14 *Hassan: Belur & Halebid*

Today we visit Belur and Halebid.

Belur and Halebid were both capitals of The Medieval Hoysala kings who built the exquisitely carved temples in the 12th & 13th centuries. Belur is famous for it Hoysala architecture; its Temple of Lord Channakeshava is embellished with carving which has few equals in the world. It took 103 years to complete and you can see why. The facade of the temple is filled with intricate sculptures and friezes with no portion left blank: elephants, episodes from the epics, and sensuous dancers.

Halebid was the seat of Hoysala Kingdom; its great Hoyaleswara Temple was built in the typical Hoysala style. The temple, dating back to the 12th century, is astounding for its wealth of sculptural details. The walls of the temple are covered with an endless variety of gods and goddesses, animals, birds and dancing girls. Yet no two facets of the temple are the same. This magnificent temple -- guarded by a Nandi Bull -- was never completed, despite 86 years of labour.

We return to Hassan.

Overnight in Hassan. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 15 *Hassan - Mysore*

This morning we travel to Mysore, arriving around midday.

In the afternoon we explore Mysore, famous for its silk and sandalwood, as well as its numerous palaces, well laid out boulevards and beautiful parks. The Maharaja's Palace is the most impressive of Mysore's ochre-coloured buildings -- a modern edifice built in 1897, where the oriental decorative imagination runs wild. One of the largest palaces in India, it is a gigantic synthesis of Hindu and Muslim styles. The royal family's private chambers, including the impressive Durbar Hall, are open to the public. The Marriage Hall has life-like paintings of the Dassera procession and in the museum is the ruler's golden elephant throne, used during festivities. Chamundi Hill lies 10 km from Mysore and is named after Chanduswari, the consort of Lord Shiva and the patron goddess of the royal family of Mysore. On the way up is a colossal figure of Nandi, carved out of a single rock in 1659. The view from the top of the hill is superb.

Overnight in Mysore. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 16 *Mysore - Bangalore: City Tour*

Today we travel by road to Bangalore, the cosmopolitan capital of Karnataka.

Bangalore is called the Garden City for it's delicate blossoms and greenery that impart a unique beauty to this lovely city. The weather is the city's best feature, with pleasant summers and bearable winters. Bangalore, which literally means the 'town of baked beans', was founded by Kempe Gowda, a chieftain of the Vijayanagar Empire, around the 16th century. He built four towers in four directions to specify its boundaries.

On arrival we tour Bangalore, visiting the Lal Bagh Botanical Gardens, which has a variety of old trees, fountains, lotus pools, terraces and an assortment of tropical herbs and subtropical herbs. We also see the government buildings and the Maharaja's Palace.

Overnight in Bangalore. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 17 *Bangalore - Kochi: City Tour*

Early this morning we fly to Kochi (Cochin).

The history of European involvement in Kochi, from the early sixteenth century onwards, is dominated by the aggression of, successively, the Portuguese, Dutch and British, competing in their desire to control the port and its lucrative spice trade. From 1800, the state of Cochin was part of the British Madras Presidency; from 1812 until Independence in 1947, its administration was made the responsibility of a series of diwans, or financial ministers. In the 1920s, the British expanded the port to make it suitable for modern ocean-going ships; extensive dredging created Willingdon Island, between Ernakulam and Fort Cochin.

On arrival we have a tour of Kochi, including: Chinese fishing Nets -- A legacy of one of the earliest visitors to the Malabar coast, these nets are unmistakable as one enters the harbour. Records show that they were first erected between AD 1350 and 1450. Constructed out of Teak wood and Bamboo poles, they work on the principle of balance. The best place to watch is from Vasco Da Gama square, a narrow promenade that parallels the beach with little stalls that serve fresh seafood, tender coconuts and so on.

Santa Cruz Basilica: Built by the Portuguese, the church was elevated to a Cathedral by the Pope Paul IV in 1558. Spared by the Dutch conqueror of Cochin who destroyed many Catholic buildings in 1663, it later fell into the hands of the British who demolished it when they took over Cochin in 1795. For almost 100 years there was no church on the site, until the Bishop Dom Gomez Vereira commissioned a new building in 1887.

Overnight in Kochi. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 18 *Kochi - Allaphuza: Houseboat*

We continue by road to Alappuzha (Alleppey), known as the "Venice of the East", situated on Vembanad Lake, the longest in India. A maze of canals and a network of bridges give this busy commercial town its descriptive sobriquet. Alleppey is known for its coir, the retted fibre of the coconut husk and for black pepper.

Today we board our houseboat for a very special Kerala delight -- a slow boat through its forests and palm-shaded canals. We take a leisurely cruise on the beautiful backwaters, enjoying the magnificent scenery along the waterways and stopping to admire what history and religion have left along the way.

THE HOUSEBOAT will be approx 60 feet long and 13 feet wide in the middle. There are comfortable beds, and traditional lanterns, and air-conditioning. There will be a sundeck for daytime relaxation. The boats are made of local natural fibres that truly echo the villagers harmony with the natural surroundings. As your oarsman slowly and silently propels us along the backwaters, we will enjoy the magnificent scenery along the waterways. We will stop to view working villages and witness locals fishing, swimming, crafting, and bathing (most boats will have oarsman though some will be motorized with a silencer on the motor).

NOTE: Single cabins are NOT available on the houseboat. Single supplements reflect sharing for this one night.

Overnight houseboat cruise. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 19 *Allaphuza - Chennai*

Today we return to Kochi and fly to Chennai (Madras).

Overnight in Chennai. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 20 *Chennai: Mahabalipuram & Kanchipuram*

Today we travel to 60 km (37 mi) to Mahabalipuram, the seaport of the ancient Palava dynasty of Kanci. The temples and carvings here date back to the 7th century. They stand out because of their simplicity and the fact that they also depict many scenes from the every-day life of every-day people. It is now recognized as the site of some of the greatest architectural and sculptural achievements in India.

Kanchipuram is known as one of India's Seven Sacred Cities and the historical capital of the Pallavas under whom, from AD 6th to 8th century, it became the citadel of Cholas, Vijayanagar Kings, the Muslims and the British. It has been a centre of Tamil learning, cultural and religious background for centuries. Kanchi has magnificent temples of unique architectural beauty bearing eloquent testimony to its glorious Dravidian heritage.

After a comprehensive tour of the site we return to Chennai.

Overnight in Chennai. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 21 *Chennai, India - Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, is, like Mumbai and Calcutta, a comparatively modern creation. It was founded by the British East India Company in 1639, on a narrow five-kilometre strip of land between the Cooum and Adyar rivers, a few kilometres north of the ancient Tamil port of Mylapore and the Portuguese settlement of San Thome, established in 1522. The British were repeatedly challenged by the French who, in 1746, destroyed much of the city. Robert Clive ("Clive of India"), then a clerk, was taken prisoner, an experience said to have inspired him to become a campaigner. Clive was among the first to re-enter Chennai when it was retaken three years alter, and continued to use it as his base. Following this, fortifications were strengthened and the British survived a year-long French siege (1759), completing the work in 1783. By this time, however, Calcutta was in the ascendancy and Madras lost its national importance.

Our city sightseeing of Chennai includes a visit to the National Art Gallery and Museum, which has a selection of ancient paintings from almost all schools of art, as well as a section entirely devoted to modern art. We will visit Fort St George, once a stronghold of the British; St Mary's Church, the oldest Anglican church in India; the San Thome Cathedral where the remains of St Thomas the Apostle are believed to have been buried; the Mylapore Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva and the Light House which is the only one of its kind in the world to be located on top of a High Court. We drive along the Marina, the thirteen kilometre-long beach which, with its shining white sands, aqua blue sea and violet lights at night, is the pride of Chennai.

After dinner we board our evening flight to Colombo, Sri Lanka. Upon arrival we transfer to a point outside the city, the exact location of which depends on the time of our incoming flights. We may overnight near the airport or down the road a bit so that we are well-placed for tomorrow's journey to Muthurajawela Nature Reserve.

Overnight near Colombo. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 22 *Colombo Area - Muthurajawela Nature Reserve - Anuradhapura*

This morning we make the 180 km (110 mile) drive to Anuradhapura, the first capital of Sri Lanka.

En route we take a boat ride through the Muthurajawela Nature Reserve. This protected area of wetland is thriving with bird life, with 126 resident species and 40 species which migrate here. The boat ride provides a view of Sri Lankan wetlands as never seen before. Imagine listening to the chorus of feathered creatures, watching the water lilies dancing on the tropical sun, monkeys swinging on treetops and crocodiles moving stealthily in water.

We continue to Anuradhapura, arriving in the afternoon.

Overnight near Anuradhapura. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 23 *Anuradhapura - Dambulla*

This morning we visit a selection of the most remarkable sights of Anuradhapura. As per written records Anuradhapura was made royal capital by the king Panduk Anhaya in 380 BC. It remained residence and royal capital for 119 successive Singhalese kings till the year AD 1000 when it was abandoned and the capital moved to Polonnaruwa. You will see some of the most famous as well as the tallest dagoba of Sri Lanka, remains from palaces, temples, monasteries, ceremonial baths and the temple of the holy Bo-tree. This tree was grown from a sapling of the very tree under which more than 2500 years ago the Buddha found enlightenment.

We continue to Dambulla and have a tour of its major attractions, which are spread over 5 caves containing statues and paintings. Since it's founding in the first century BC by King Valagamba, many improvements and additions have been carried out to the collection. Hindu statues are believed to be of the 12 century AD and the latest paintings are of the

late 18-century. Dambulla is a unique and important historical site because of the amalgamation of material from many eras.

Overnight in Dambulla. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 24 *Dambulla - Polonnaruwa - Dambulla*

In the morning we drive to Polonnaruwa for a visit of the well-preserved remains of capital of the Singhalese kings from the 11th to the 13th century. We see the excavations: Temples, dagobas, the royal palace, the royal library. The most famous Singhalese king, Parakrama Bahu the Great (1153-1186), built in the environs of Polonnaruwa, an impressive irrigation system with many artificial tanks interconnected with irrigation channels.

Overnight in Dambulla. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 25 *Dambulla - Sigiriya - Kandy*

Taking advantage of cooler morning temperatures, we will have a tour of Sigiriya. The complex lies on the steep slopes and at the summit of a granite peak standing some 370 m (1,220 feet) high. This is the earliest surviving royal palace in Sri Lanka, with several chambers and meticulously planned water gardens, the earliest such gardens found in Asia. The Mirror Wall, which had been exposed to elements for over fifteen centuries, still carry some of the original sheen that has given it the name. This archaeological site, unparalleled in South Asia, has been declared a World Heritage Site.

We continue for a tour of a local spice garden. A local guide will most likely show us custard apples, jackfruit, cocoa, cardamom, pineapples, lemon grass, wild asparagus, nutmeg, curry leaves, cinnamon, ginger, vanilla plant, coco, aloe vera, etc. We continue our travel through the interior of the island, past paddy fields, palm groves and coconut plantations.

Our journey continues via a road that begins to ascend gradually. After 92 km / 58 miles (90 minutes), we arrive at the old royal city of Kandy, situated at 500 m (1,640 feet) above sea level and beautifully nestled between green hills. In its very centre lies a small artificial lake and palace of the last Singhalese king which has become a temple and the holiest shrine in Sri Lanka and where the tooth relic of the Lord Buddha is highly venerated.

On arrival we will drive around the lake and visit the National Museum. This evening we shall pay a visit to the Temple of the Holy Tooth followed by an opportunity to attend a dance performance (subject to availability) where we will see the famous Kandyan dance as well as up-country and devil dances.

Overnight in Kandy. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 26 *Kandy: Botanical Garden - Nuwara Eliya*

After breakfast we will visit the world-famous Botanical Garden at Peradeniya. The park dates back to 1371 under the reign of King Vikrama Bahu III when he held court here. The English put the cornerstone of the present garden in 1821. During the Second World War the garden served as the headquarters of Earl Mountbatten, the supreme commander of the allied forces in Southeast Asia who later became the last Viceroy of India. In the garden we find an immense variety of orchids, spice trees, palms, bushes, as well as tropical plants and flowers of all types.

We then travel 77 km (48 miles) to Nuwara Eliya. The road ascends steadily and shortly before reaching Nuwara Eliya, we will have climbed 1500 m (4,920 feet). You are now in the tea-country; wherever you look, you will see tea

plantations, the rich full green of thousands and thousands of tea bushes. Occasionally you can see a few rice fields and near villages, vegetable plantations or gardens. En route we visit a tea factory and plantation.

We tour the resort town of Nuwara Eliya, situated at 2070 m (6,790 feet) above sea level, lies on a little lake and is surrounded by mountains covered over and over by tea bushes. The town itself was the favourite hill station of the British who set it up to look like a misplaced British village. The charming, old, pink-brick post office, the English country house-like Hill Club with its hunting pictures, mounted hunting trophies and fish, the 18-hole golf course (said to be one of the finest in Asia), and even the well-stocked trout streams speak of the area's English past.

Overnight in Nuwara Eliya. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 27 *Nuwara Eliya - Colombo*

We have an early start for our drive back to Colombo to allow us time to have a panoramic tour of the city.

Colombo was probably known to Roman, Arab, and Chinese traders more than 2,000 years ago. Muslims settled there in the 8th century and controlled much of the trade between Sinhalese kingdoms and the outside world. The Portuguese arrived in the 16th century and built a fort to protect their spice trade. The Dutch captured the city in the 17th century. The British made the city the capital of their crown colony of Ceylon in 1802. The University of Sri Lanka, several colleges, an observatory, a national museum, and numerous churches, mosques, and Buddhist and Hindu temples are all located in and around Colombo; on the outskirts are two major Buddhist universities.

Overnight in Colombo. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 28 *Departure*

Departure from Colombo.

BON VOYAGE! Meal plan: Breakfast.