



your ultimate travel and accommodation guide to Sri Lanka

Galle - Sri Lanka Travel & Accommodation Guide

The port city of Galle is not only of historical interest but the business center of the South.

This is the right place if you want to experience the Sinhalese culture, away from the touristic hot-spots without losing out on your holiday itinerary.



Galle was known as Gimhathiththa (although Ibn Batuta in the 14th century refers to it as Qali) before the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century, when it was the main port on the island. Galle reached the height of its development in the 18th century, before the arrival of the British, who developed the harbor at Colombo.



Galle is the best example of a fortified city built by Europeans in south and southeast Asia, showing the interaction between European architectural styles and south Asian traditions. The Galle Fort is a world heritage site and the largest remaining fortress in Asia built by European invaders. Other prominent landmarks in Galle include the St. Mary's Cathedral founded by Jesuit

You can spend hours exploring the famous Dutch fort, go shopping at one of the oldest markets of Sri Lanka and the modern shopping complexes or you can enjoy the feeling of "*the good old times*" at one of the colonial-style hotels and restaurants.

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Over the last years Galle became very "boutique" with beautiful, perfectly restored colonial houses and estates. If you really want to get pampered on your holiday in Sri Lanka, a couple of days in Galle should be on your list.

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priests.

Galle - Sri Lanka Activities

Galle is a perfect mix of Sri Lanka's historical past combined with a busy market town and its colorful markets. Nearby beach resorts like Hikkaduwa and Unawatuna are making Galle an ideal gateway to the activities and attractions of Sri Lanka's South.



The Fort

First build 1589 by the Portuguese, the Galle Fort was taken over and enlarged by the Dutch in 1640. Finally the British took possession in 1796 and held onto it until the independence of Sri Lanka. It is very pleasant just to walk around and to enjoy the quiet, colonial atmosphere. A dusk stroll on top of the massive walls is an experience nobody should miss.



Diving

A good alternative to Hikkaduwa, Galle not only offers fine diving in its own right, it's also the jumping-off point for even more spectacular dive sites to the north and south. On the edge of Unawatuna Bay - the next bay along from Galle Harbor - there's a rock and coral reef with some big boulders where divers can often see triggerfish, pufferfish and other species. This is also a good spot for beginners. Further off this coast are a couple of wrecks that have flourished into spectacular artificial reefs and are home to a number of very large resident groupers.

Shopping

It is worth visiting some of the many antique shops in Galle. During the centuries of trading, which reaches back to the days of King Salomon, many precious pieces found their way to shops. Even if it is too heavy to take back home with you, the beautifully restored furniture from the Dutch- and British periods is reason enough for a visit.

In the Fort you will find many "designer" handicrafts shops, offering quality products you might wear or use at home. On the cheaper side are the small stalls and shops along Galle's main street. Just pass the police station and you'll see already the bazaar-like entry.



Excursions

Galle is a good starting point for 1/2 or one day trips to the Yala National Park, the Kottowa rainforest, Hikkaduwa, Unawatuna or the Dodanduwa Lagoon with its millions of fruit bats. Very recommendable are visits to the Doovili Ella waterfall in Hiniduma and the Kaneliya Nature Reserve,

close to Imaduwa about 15 miles from Galle. At this nature reserve you can find plenty of unique flora and fauna and various insects, small waterfalls etc.

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