



your ultimate travel and accommodation guide to Sri Lanka

## Polonnaruwa - Sri Lanka Travel & Accommodation Guide

Polonnaruwa is the ancient capital of Sri Lanka from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries and the repository of outstanding ruins, frescoes and enormous statues of reclining Buddhas. The ruins of the old city are on the shores of Lake Topawewa, man-made during the reign of a twelfth century king—a huge task, when one considers it was accomplished with nothing but manual labor. What remains of the ancient city itself is a cluster of palaces and temples contained within a rectangular city wall. The foundations of the royal palace and the king's audience hall are particularly well preserved.



An outstanding site in Polonnaruwa is the Galyhare, also known as the Cave of the Spirits of Knowledge. It is an outdoor rock wall where giant standing and reclining sculptures of the Buddha were carved out of the living rock.



These four pieces of sculpture were commissioned by Parakramabahu. The first is of a seated Buddha in deep meditation, seated on a throne decorated with lions and thunderbolts. The second is inside of a cave and records in detail Parakramabahu's initiatives to unite the Buddhist order.

The next sculpture stands twenty three feet high and expresses the serenity of the Buddha. The final, and most imposing, statue is of a reclining Buddha, which measures 46 feet in length. He is in the last moment of his life on earth, on the verge of entering nirvana.

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## Polonnaruwa - Sri Lanka Activities

As a part of Sri Lanka's **cultural triangle** Polonnaruwa is close to the ancient sites of **Dambulla**, **Anuradhapura**, **Sigiriya** and the former capital **Kandy**.



**Sigiriya**

Climb the amazing rock of **Sigiriya** with its impregnable palace fortress built in the fifth century and enjoy the magnificent views over the once magnificent royal pool, the throne, remains of the majestic palace, walk ways and gardens



**Dambulla**

**Dambulla** Rock Temple is a magnificent gallery of Buddha images and wall and ceiling paintings not seen anywhere else in the Island. It is a complex of five cave temples with its origin going back to the first1st century BC.

**Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage**

**Pinnawela** is located West of **Kandy** on the Colombo highway and hosts the largest elephant orphanage in Sri Lanka, accounting for around fifty elephants at any given time.



**Kandy**

**Kandy**, is Sri Lanka's second largest city and home of the Dalada Maligawa, one of Buddhism's most sacred temple grounds containing the palace of Sri Lanka's former king and the holy of holies, the repository of an actual tooth relic of the Lord Buddha.