



The epic tale of Rama and Sita unfolds like a celestial dance of love and devotion.

The connection between Sri Lanka and the epic figures of Rama and Ravana is rooted in the ancient Hindu epic, the Ramayana. This epic narrates the story of Lord Rama, his wife Sita, and the demon king Ravana, who is said to have ruled Lanka (present-day Sri Lanka). Here are the key elements of the Ramayana related to Sri Lanka:

Ravana

- **Ravana:** In the Ramayana, Ravana is the powerful demon king of Lanka. He is depicted as a learned and devout ruler, but with a tyrannical streak.
- **Abduction of Sita:** Ravana's key role in the epic involves the abduction of Sita, Rama's wife, which triggers the subsequent events of the Ramayana. Ravana takes Sita to his kingdom in Lanka, where he keeps her in the Ashok Vatika.

Sri Lanka in the Ramayana

- **Lanka:** The kingdom of Lanka, described as a prosperous and magnificent city, is identified with modern-day Sri Lanka. It was said to be a floating city of gold, built by the divine architect Vishwakarma.
- **Ashok Vatika:** This is the garden where Sita was held captive. It is believed to be located in present-day Nuwara Eliya, with a site known as Sita Eliya still attracting pilgrims.

Key Locations in Sri Lanka Associated with the Ramayana

1. **Sigiriya:** Some believe Sigiriya, with its rock fortress, could be connected to Ravana's palace.
2. **Ravana Ella Falls:** Named after Ravana, it is said to be one of the places where he hid Sita.
3. **Ravana Cave:** Located in Ella, this cave is believed to have been used by Ravana to hide Sita.
4. **Sita Amman Temple:** Situated in Sita Eliya, near Nuwara Eliya, it is dedicated to Sita and marks the spot where she was held captive.
5. **Ramboda:** The site of the Hanuman Temple, believed to be the place where Hanuman first set foot in Lanka.

The Ramayana's Influence on Sri Lankan Culture

- **Temples and Shrines:** Various temples in Sri Lanka are dedicated to characters from the Ramayana, attracting Hindu pilgrims.
- **Cultural Exchange:** The Ramayana has contributed to the cultural and religious exchange between India and Sri Lanka over centuries.
- **Tourism:** The Ramayana trail in Sri Lanka is a significant attraction for tourists, especially those from India, who visit these sites to connect with the epic.

Summary of the Ramayana's Sri Lankan Connection

The Ramayana's narrative of Rama's quest to rescue Sita from Ravana has deeply influenced Sri Lankan folklore, culture, and geography. The sites associated with the epic provide a rich tapestry of myth, religion, and history that continues to be celebrated and explored in contemporary Sri Lanka.

Here's a 5-day tour itinerary focusing on the key Ramayana sites in Sri Lanka, providing a short but enriching experience of the places associated with the epic:

Day 1: Arrival in Colombo

- **Morning/Afternoon:** Arrive at Bandaranaike International Airport, Colombo.
- **Transfer:** Head to your hotel in Colombo and check-in.
- **Evening:** Relax and explore Colombo city.
- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Colombo.

Day 2: Colombo to Nuwara Eliya

- **Morning:** Travel to Nuwara Eliya (approximately 5-6 hours from Colombo).
- **Afternoon:** Visit the Sita Amman Temple in Sita Eliya, believed to be the place where Sita was held captive by Ravana.
- **Evening:** Explore the scenic town of Nuwara Eliya, often referred to as "Little England."
- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Nuwara Eliya.

Day 3: Nuwara Eliya to Ella

- **Morning:** Visit Hakgala Botanical Garden, associated with the Ashok Vatika where Sita was kept.
- **Late Morning:** Travel to Ella (approximately 2-3 hours from Nuwara Eliya).
- **Afternoon:** Visit the Ravana Ella Falls and the Ravana Cave, sites linked to Ravana's legend.

- **Evening:** Enjoy the scenic beauty of Ella and relax.
- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Ella.

Day 4: Ella to Sigiriya

- **Morning:** Travel to Sigiriya (approximately 4-5 hours from Ella).
- **Afternoon:** Visit the Sigiriya Rock Fortress, some believe it to be linked to Ravana's ancient palace.
- **Evening:** Explore the Sigiriya Museum and the surrounding areas.
- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Sigiriya.

Day 5: Sigiriya to Colombo

- **Morning:** Visit the Dambulla Cave Temple on the way back to Colombo, adding a cultural stop to your journey.
- **Afternoon:** Travel back to Colombo (approximately 4-5 hours from Sigiriya).
- **Evening:** Depart from Bandaranaike International Airport.

Additional Recommendations

- **Transport:** Consider hiring a private vehicle for comfort and flexibility.
- **Guide:** Hiring a guide knowledgeable about the Ramayana can enhance the experience with detailed stories and historical context.
- **Accommodation:** Book hotels in advance, especially in popular tourist areas like Nuwara Eliya and Ella.

This short tour covers significant Ramayana-related sites in Sri Lanka, providing a glimpse into the epic's rich cultural and historical connection to the island.

Here's a comprehensive 10-day tour itinerary focusing on the Ramayana sites in Sri Lanka, offering an in-depth exploration of the locations associated with the epic:

Day 1: Arrival in Colombo

- **Morning/Afternoon:** Arrive at Bandaranaike International Airport, Colombo.
- **Transfer:** Head to your hotel in Colombo and check-in.
- **Evening:** Relax and explore Colombo city.

- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Colombo.

Day 2: Colombo to Chilaw and Munneswaram

- **Morning:** Travel to Chilaw (approximately 2 hours from Colombo).
- **Visit:** Munneswaram Temple, a site where Lord Rama prayed to Shiva after his battle with Ravana.
- **Afternoon:** Visit Manavari Temple, where Lord Rama installed a Shiva Lingam.
- **Evening:** Return to Colombo.
- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Colombo.

Day 3: Colombo to Sigiriya

- **Morning:** Travel to Sigiriya (approximately 4-5 hours from Colombo).
- **Afternoon:** Visit Sigiriya Rock Fortress, believed to be linked to Ravana's ancient palace.
- **Evening:** Explore the Sigiriya Museum.
- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Sigiriya.

Day 4: Sigiriya to Kandy

- **Morning:** Visit Dambulla Cave Temple on the way to Kandy.
- **Afternoon:** Travel to Kandy (approximately 2.5 hours from Sigiriya).
- **Evening:** Visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic and explore Kandy city.
- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Kandy.

Day 5: Kandy to Nuwara Eliya

- **Morning:** Travel to Nuwara Eliya (approximately 2.5 hours from Kandy).
- **Afternoon:** Visit the Sita Amman Temple in Sita Eliya and the Hakgala Botanical Garden, associated with the Ashok Vatika.
- **Evening:** Explore the scenic town of Nuwara Eliya.
- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Nuwara Eliya.

Day 6: Nuwara Eliya to Ella

- **Morning:** Take a scenic train ride from Nuwara Eliya to Ella.

- **Afternoon:** Visit the Ravana Ella Falls and the Ravana Cave.
- **Evening:** Relax and enjoy the scenic beauty of Ella.
- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Ella.

Day 7: Ella to Kataragama

- **Morning:** Travel to Kataragama (approximately 3-4 hours from Ella).
- **Afternoon:** Visit the Kataragama Temple, dedicated to Lord Murugan, and associated with Lord Rama's journey.
- **Evening:** Explore the sacred city and its surroundings.
- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Kataragama.

Day 8: Kataragama to Tissamaharama and Yala

- **Morning:** Visit Tissamaharama, believed to be the landing site of Hanuman.
- **Afternoon:** Enjoy a safari at Yala National Park, where you can see a variety of wildlife.
- **Evening:** Return to Kataragama.
- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Kataragama.

Day 9: Kataragama to Galle

- **Morning:** Travel to Galle (approximately 3.5 hours from Kataragama).
- **Afternoon:** Explore the Galle Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **Evening:** Visit the Rumassala Hill in Unawatuna, associated with the legend of Hanuman's search for medicinal herbs.
- **Overnight:** Stay at a hotel in Galle.

Day 10: Galle to Colombo

- **Morning:** Travel back to Colombo (approximately 2.5 hours from Galle).
- **Afternoon:** Visit the Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara, where Lord Buddha is said to have visited.
- **Evening:** Depart from Bandaranaike International Airport.

Additional Recommendations

- **Transport:** Consider hiring a private vehicle for comfort and flexibility.

- **Guide:** Hiring a guide knowledgeable about the Ramayana can enhance the experience with detailed stories and historical context.
- **Accommodation:** Book hotels in advance, especially in popular tourist areas like Nuwara Eliya and Ella.

This extended itinerary provides an immersive experience into the Ramayana-related sites in Sri Lanka, combining cultural, historical, and scenic locations for a memorable journey.